

First Baptist Church of Manchester Bylaws

Adopted May 8, 2022

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Article I Name

The name of this body is First Baptist Church of Manchester (hereafter referred to in these bylaws as “First Baptist Church” or “the church” or “the corporation.”). The church is a Tennessee religious public benefit nonprofit corporation.

Article II Mission Statement

The mission of First Baptist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

We understand that the church makes disciples through the power of the Holy Spirit by:

- Evangelizing the lost in our area and sending missionaries to evangelize the unreached peoples of the world,
- Teaching sound doctrine to equip believers for growth and service,
- Cultivating a fellowship of loving encouragement and joyful worship, and
- Ministering to the needs of the church and the world in the name of Jesus.

Article III Beliefs

III.1 The Bible

The Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the ultimate authority for our beliefs and conduct. The church reserves the right to interpret the Bible as its sole direction for faith and practice.

III.2 Statement of Faith

The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000.

III.3 Church Ordinances

The two ordinances of the church are believer’s baptism by immersion and the Lord’s Supper.

- A. Believer’s baptism by immersion is a requirement for church membership. New Christians are to be baptized by immersion as a confession of their repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Christians who have not yet been baptized by immersion are asked to be immersed as the common sign of our union with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Christians who have been baptized by immersion in a Baptist church or another church of orthodox Christian beliefs do not need to be rebaptized when joining the church. Baptism will be administered by a pastor or another church member designated by a pastor.
- B. The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic covenant renewal for those who are baptized believers in Christ. Usually, the Lord’s Supper will be celebrated at least four times a year. Times for the celebration for the Lord’s Supper will be planned by the lead pastor in consultation with the deacon council. The Lord’s Supper will be administered by the pastors or deacons or other church members designated by the pastors or deacons.

III.4 Statement on Gender, Sexuality, and Marriage

We believe that God created each person as male or female. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God. We believe that marriage is the exclusive union of one man and one woman. We believe that God has commanded that there be no intimate sexual activity outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. Thus, adultery and homosexuality are sinful and offensive to God. Persons whose conduct does not conform to this statement are loved by God and are welcome to attend First Baptist Church but will not be received as members or hired as employees. Pastors of First Baptist Church will not participate in weddings which do not conform to this statement. The facilities of First Baptist Church will not be used for weddings that do not conform to this statement.

III.5 Statement on the Use of Drugs and Alcoholic Beverages

The use of drugs or alcoholic beverages is prohibited on the campus of First Baptist Church or at any event affiliated with First Baptist Church.

Article IV Relationships

The government of this church is vested solely in its membership. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes the value of cooperation among Baptist churches. The church voluntarily cooperates with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Duck River Baptist Association for the purposes of missions, ministry, education, and fellowship.

Article V Membership

V.1 Qualifications for Membership

The qualifications for church membership are repentance of sin, personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and believer's baptism by immersion (for baptism see Article III.3.A).

Thus, a person may be received for membership:

- A. Upon confession of faith in Christ and as a candidate for baptism by immersion.
- B. By promise of letter of recommendation from another Baptist church.
- C. By statement of prior conversion experience and prior baptism by immersion.

V.2 Acceptance to Church Membership

Persons may present themselves for church membership in any of the following ways:

- A. By presenting themselves during the invitation and completing a membership application at any worship service or gathering of the church at any venue and on any campus.
- B. By presenting themselves for membership and completing a membership application at new member orientation.
- C. By presenting themselves for membership and completing a membership application in a meeting or conversation with a pastor or deacon.

Those who present themselves for membership will be immediately welcomed and received but will not become members with full voting rights until they receive a majority vote of members present at the next member meeting.

V.3 Classes of Members

There shall be two classes of members, resident and nonresident members. Nonresident members are defined as persons who are, because of the location of their residence, designated by the congregation as such. Nonresident members shall not be entitled to vote or be elected as deacons, other officers, or committee members. All other members are resident members. Only resident members may vote on matters, corporate actions and otherwise, on which members vote.

V. 4 Expectations of Members

- A. Members are expected to attend New Member Orientation within a year after joining the church. Those considering membership may choose to attend New Member Orientation before they join the church.
- B. Members are expected to attend worship and a Connection Group at First Baptist Church whenever they are physically able.
- C. Members are expected to attend member meetings.
- D. Members are expected to give financially to the support of the church.
- E. Members are expected to use their spiritual gifts in the ministry of the church.
- F. Members are expected to be active, prayerful, unifying members of the body of Christ.
- G. Members are expected to follow Christ as Lord of their lives and grow in obedience to his commands.
- H. Members are expected to join and become active in another church when permanently moving to a new area.
- I. Members are expected to abide by these bylaws.

V.5 Voting Rights of Church Members

First Baptist Church is congregational in its government under the Lordship of Christ. The membership retains the exclusive right to self-government. The members have delegated authority to others in these bylaws and may by resolution make other delegations of authority not contrary to or inconsistent with these bylaws.

- A. The resident members retain the authority to vote on all matters submitted to the membership, including but not limited to corporate actions, that is, those matters which involve the legal actions of the church, including but not limited to a decision to: sue; purchase, lease, mortgage, or sell real property; borrow money; approve the merger or dissolution of the corporation; amend the charter or bylaws; elect the deacons to serve on the deacon council; elect the officers of the corporation; and enter into contracts or delegate to others the authority to enter into contracts on behalf of the corporation.
- B. Without limiting the breadth of the members' authority in A above, the members retain the authority to act on the following items which shall be voted on during Sunday morning

worship services by written ballot. A quorum of 20 percent of resident members is required. A vote of 75 percent of the members present and voting will be required for passage. Signed ballots may be used to ensure the integrity of the voting process.

- 1) Calling or dismissing the lead pastor
- 2) Calling any full-time pastor or minister to the staff
- 3) Electing deacons to serve on the deacon council
- 4) Amending Articles I-IV of the bylaws

C. The members retain the authority to act on the following items which may be voted on at any member meeting in accordance with Articles V.9. A majority vote of members present and voting will be required for passage, unless otherwise stated in these bylaws.

- 1) Approving candidates for church membership
- 2) Amending the church bylaws other than Articles I-IV. This requires a two-thirds affirmative vote as specified in Article XIV.2.
- 3) Approving the annual church budget
- 4) Amending the church budget by more than 10 percent of the total budget
- 5) Electing the annual slate of church leaders
- 6) Purchasing or selling real estate
- 7) Constructing buildings
- 8) Establishing a mission, ministry center, or other church campus
- 9) Relocating the church office
- 10) Approving the ordination of a pastor
- 11) Excluding or reinstating members because of church discipline (Article V.7)

V.6 Termination of Church Membership

Membership may be terminated in the following ways:

- A. Notification of the member having joined another church.
- B. Written request of the member.
- C. Exclusion, pursuant to action in Article V.7
- D. Death

V.7 Discipline of Church Members

The church has the responsibility to maintain the purity, orthodoxy, and unity of its membership. When a church member is engaged in obvious, continuous, unrepentant sin, the church will attempt to call the member to repentance and restoration following the pattern described in Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Corinthians 5:1-11, and Galatians 6:1. The goal of this process is redemptive rather than punitive. This process shall be pursued with gentleness and discretion. If a member is defiant and unrepentant, the church may vote at a membership meeting to exclude the person from membership. A person previously excluded from membership may apply to be reinstated to membership upon consultation with a pastor and evidence of repentance. The church may vote to reinstate the person at a membership meeting.

V.8 Congregational Meetings

The church will meet on Sundays for worship, Bible study, and fellowship on a schedule determined by the lead pastor in consultation with the deacon council. All persons are welcome at these meetings as long as behavior is not deemed disruptive. The lead pastor may also schedule meetings for worship, fellowship, ministry, and evangelism at other times.

V.9 Member Meetings

- A. Regular member meetings will be held quarterly on a schedule designated by the lead pastor or in his absence by the staff and deacon council. The meeting dates, times, and locations will be published in church communications at least one week prior to the meeting. The first order of business at each member meeting will be to approve candidates for membership. The first regular meeting in each year shall constitute the required annual meeting of the corporation. Included in the agenda of the annual meeting shall be reports by the president and treasurer on the activities and financial condition of the corporation.
- B. Special member meetings may be called at any time by the lead pastor or the deacon council chairman or a standing committee, provided that notice has been given in church communications at least one week prior to the meeting, and the notice includes a description of the matter or matters for which the meeting is called.
- C. Moderator: Member meetings shall be moderated by the lead pastor or someone he designates. In the absence of the lead pastor or his designee, the members shall elect another pastor or the chairman of the deacon council as moderator.
- D. Quorum. Except as provided otherwise in these bylaws, a quorum shall consist of the resident members as present.
- E. Proxy Voting. Only resident members present in person may vote.
- F. Majority Required. Except as provided in this section or elsewhere in these bylaws or the charter, if a quorum exists, action on a matter is approved if the votes cast favoring the action exceed the votes cast opposing the action.
- G. Statutory Requirements for Extraordinary Actions. In addition to the requirements for a different majority found elsewhere in the charter and these bylaws, the following actions shall be approved upon receiving the votes of two-thirds of the vote cast: 1) merger; 2) the sale, lease, exchange, or the disposition otherwise of all or substantially all of the corporation's property other than in the usual and regular course of the corporation's activities; 3) dissolution; or 4) amendment of the charter. Further, the quorum required for the meeting in which these actions are taken shall be twenty percent of the resident membership. Notice shall be given in church communications at least four weeks prior to the meeting. The notice shall state that the purpose, or one of the purposes, of the meeting is to consider the proposed action.
- H. Parliamentary Authority. *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be the parliamentary authority.

Article VI Officers of the Corporation

The lead pastor will serve as president of the corporation. He will be the chief executive officer of the corporation. He will supervise other pastors and staff and control the affairs of the church, respecting the authority of the members and the deacon council and these bylaws. The deacon council will serve as the board of directors. The chairman of the deacon council will serve as chairman of the board of directors. The vice-chairman of the deacon council shall serve as vice-chairman of the board of directors. The secretary of the deacon council shall keep the minutes of the board of directors, shall keep records of the member meetings, shall serve as secretary of the corporation, and shall authenticate the records of the corporation. Officers and directors will serve without compensation except that they will be allowed reimbursement of their expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The officers and directors will not be personally liable for the debts, liabilities, or other obligations of the corporation. The directors and officers will be indemnified by the corporation to the fullest extent permissible under the laws of Tennessee.

Article VII Pastors, Ministers, and Other Church Staff

VII.1 Lead Pastor

A. Role of the Lead Pastor

The lead pastor will lead the church in carrying out the mission statement of the church. He will preach, teach, cast a vision for the work of the church, lead the church staff, set the church calendar, and equip the members for the work of ministry. The lead pastor may participate as an ex officio member of any committee.

B. Call of the Lead Pastor

The deacon council will recommend to the church a search committee for a lead pastor. The search committee will make recommendation to the church of a candidate.

Recommendation of salary, benefits, and terms will be coordinated with the personnel committee and deacon council. Church members will have opportunity to meet the candidate and hear him preach prior to a vote. Voting will be in accordance with Article V.5.B.

C. Absence of the Lead Pastor

If the lead pastor resigns, dies, or cannot fulfill his responsibilities because of illness or other circumstances, the deacon council will coordinate the filling of this role in his absence or recommend to the church an interim lead pastor.

D. Succession of the Lead Pastor

If the lead pastor plans to retire or move to a new area of ministry, the church may choose to transition to a new lead pastor in a process of succession. The deacon council will recommend to the church a search team to lead this process. This team will recommend to the church a candidate for lead-pastor elect, and will recommend the terms and duration of this position, in consultation with the current lead pastor.

VII.2 Other Pastors and Full-Time Ministers

The church may call and employ additional pastors as needed. Pastors will be men over age 21. Ministers will be men or women over age 21. Job descriptions for these roles will be prepared by the lead pastor in consultation with the deacon council. A search team will be recommended to the church by the lead pastor and deacon council. Salary, benefits, and terms of call will be set by the personnel and stewardship committees in consultation with the lead pastor. Members will vote on the call of pastors and full-time ministers in accordance with Article V.5.B.

VII.3 Part-Time Ministry Staff

Part-time ministry staff will be men or women over age 21 who are members of First Baptist Church. These staff members may be hired by the lead pastor or his designee in consultation with the personnel committee.

VII.4 Other Church Staff

All other church staff members not listed in sections VII.1-VII.3 above will be hired by the staff member who supervises that staff member, in consultation with the lead pastor and personnel committee. It is preferable that these staff members be members of First Baptist Church, but non-members will be considered for custodial or technical roles when no qualified church member has applied.

VII.5 Dismissal of Staff

The members may dismiss the lead pastor, pursuant to Article V.5.B. The lead pastor, in consultation with the personnel committee and with approval of the deacon council, may dismiss other pastors, ministers, and other church leaders. Staff supervisors may dismiss other staff with the approval of the lead pastor and personnel committee.

Article VIII Deacons

VIII.1 The Role of Deacons

Deacons serve as extensions of the pastoral ministry team of the church. Each deacon who is able will participate in the deacon family ministry plan. Each deacon will be assigned to a connection group to serve in a pastoral role to that group. Deacons will meet regularly to pray for the needs of the church. Deacons will serve the Lord's Supper at the direction of the deacon council chairman.

VIII.2 Deacon Qualifications

Candidates for deacons will be male church members at least 21 years old who have been members of the church for at least one year and have demonstrated spiritual leadership through active participation in the ministry of the church. They must meet the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

VIII.3 Deacon Nominations

Each year church members will be invited to nominate up to two men to be ordained as new deacons and begin serving in the deacon family ministry plan. Each man receiving at least ten nominations will be considered by the ministry staff and deacon council. Those who meet the qualifications for deacons and who agree to be considered will be presented to the congregation for a yes or no vote. Each man who receives 75 percent of votes cast will be a candidate for ordination. The following year these men will be eligible to be elected to the deacon council.

VIII.4 Deacon Ordination

Candidates for deacon ordination will appear before an ordination council at which all ordained deacons and ministers of the church are invited to participate. The candidates will be asked about their Christian testimony and doctrine. At the end of the council, a vote will be taken whether to recommend an ordination service. Upon an affirmative vote, an ordination council will be scheduled by the lead pastor and deacon council chairman.

VIII.5 Deacons Ordained by Other Baptist Churches

Deacons who have been ordained by other Baptist churches may be considered for service after they have been a member of First Baptist Church for at least one year. The deacon council will consider these men and vote whether to invite them to serve as deacons at First Baptist Church. Upon an affirmative vote, they will begin to serve in the deacon family ministry plan. The following year these men will be eligible to be elected to the deacon council.

VIII.6 Deacon Council

A. Composition of the deacon council

The deacon council will be composed of ordained deacons who have served at least one year in the deacon family ministry plan. There will be 15 members of the deacon council, each serving a three-year term on a rotating basis. Five members of the council will rotate off each year, and five new members will be elected. A deacon will not be eligible for reelection to the deacon council until he has been off the council for two years.

B. Election of the deacon council

A list of deacons serving in the deacon family ministry plan will be presented to the congregation in advance of the election each year. This list will not include those currently serving on the deacon council or those who rotated off the council the previous year. On a designated Sunday the congregation will vote by secret ballot. The congregation may vote for as many men as there are vacancies on the council. Those receiving the most votes will be elected to the council unless a person is unwilling to serve or the ministry staff and deacon council have reason to believe a person has spiritual or moral hindrances which render him unqualified. In this case, the person receiving the next highest number of votes will be asked to serve.

C. Officers of the deacon council

The officers of the deacon council will be a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. These officers will be elected annually by a majority vote of the deacon council.

D. Duties of the deacon council

- 1) Provide counsel and encouragement to the lead pastor and ministry staff as specified throughout these bylaws.
- 2) Administer the church benevolence fund in consultation with the lead pastor and staff.
- 3) Give oversight to the process of church discipline in consultation with the lead pastor and staff.
- 4) Act as legal agents in such transactions as the purchase or sale of property or borrowing of money, as directed by vote of the membership. The deacon council will vote to authorize two members to affix their signatures to legal documents.
- 5) Review the annual church budget prepared by the stewardship committee before it is presented to the church.

E. Meetings of the deacon council

The deacon council may have regular and special meetings. If the time and place of the meeting is fixed by the deacon council, the meeting is a regular meeting. All other meetings are special meetings. Special meetings may be called by the chairman of the deacon council in consultation with the lead pastor upon no less than two days' notice to each member of the deacon council of the time and place but not the purpose of the meeting. A quorum will consist of fifty percent of the members of the deacon council. No votes may be taken unless the required quorum is present. The deacon council may meet in-person, virtually, or in a combination of some members in-person and some meeting virtually. A member is meeting "virtually" and considered to be present if all members participating in the meeting may simultaneously hear each other. Decisions require a majority vote of the council members who are present either in-person or virtually. The deacon council secretary will record minutes of the meeting.

Article IX Committees

IX.1 Standing Committees

The standing committees shall be the nominating committee, stewardship committee, and personnel committee.

IX.2 Nominating Committee

The nominating committee will be composed of three members who serve three-year terms, with one person rotating off the committee each year. The nominating committee will be recommended to the church by the discipleship pastor or other staff member designated by the lead pastor. The nominating committee will enlist all elected church leaders including connection group leaders, committee members, treasurer, and clerk. The nominations will be presented for vote at a member meeting prior to the beginning of the new church

programming year. Vacancies in leadership that occur throughout the church year may be filled by the ministry staff without vote of the members. All elected church leaders must be members of First Baptist Church.

IX.3 Stewardship Committee

The stewardship committee will be composed of three members who serve three-year terms, with one person rotating off the committee each year. Duties of the stewardship committee are described in Articles XI.

IX.4 Personnel Committee

The personnel committee will be composed of three members who serve three-year terms, with one person rotating off the committee each year. The personnel committee will recommend staff compensation to the stewardship committee for the annual church budget. The personnel committee will assist the lead pastor and deacon council in recommending compensation and terms of employment for new staff members. The personnel committee, in consultation with the lead pastor, will prepare and update a personnel manual. The personnel committee will review the annual staff evaluations. The personnel committee may assist staff members in interviewing potential staff hires.

IX.5 Other Committees and Teams

The nominating committee may recommend to the church other committees or teams as needed for the ministry of the church. These may be constructed as committees with rotating membership or as teams with no specified size or length of service.

Article X Other Church Leaders

X.1 Treasurer

The treasurer will be nominated by the nominating committee and elected by the church as described in Section IX.1. There will be no limit to the number of years the treasurer may serve. The treasurer will be an ex officio member of the stewardship committee. The treasurer will be responsible for receiving, recording, and disbursing all funds of the church. The treasurer will keep financial records and produce regular financial statements. The treasurer may delegate some of these duties to a financial secretary or other staff member.

X.2 Clerk

The clerk will be nominated by the nominating committee and elected by the church at a member meeting. There will be no limit to the number of years the clerk may serve. The clerk will maintain membership records. The clerk will grant requests for termination of membership. The clerk will assist the secretary of the deacon council in maintaining and filing minutes of the deacon council meetings and member meetings. With the approval of the lead pastor, the clerk may delegate some of these duties to a staff member.

Article XI Church Finances

XI.1 Annual Church Budget

The stewardship committee will plan the annual church budget, with recommendations from the lead pastor, other church staff, personnel committee, and other ministry leaders. The budget will designate an account supervisor for each line item. The proposed budget will be presented to the deacon council for review. The proposed budget will be presented to the members for vote at a member meeting prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.

XI.2 Amendment of the Annual Church Budget

The stewardship committee may amend the budget during the budget year. If the proposed amendment amounts to more than 10 percent of the total budget, church members will vote on the amendment at a member meeting.

XI.3 Unbudgeted and Emergency Expenses

The treasurer, in consultation with the lead pastor, may approve unbudgeted expenditures from undesignated savings or emergency reserve of amounts less than \$5000. These expenditures will be reported to the stewardship committee. Expenditures of these funds greater than \$5000 shall generally require prior approval of the stewardship committee. In case of an emergency that jeopardizes the property, organization, or members of the church, the lead pastor, or in his absence the treasurer, deacon council chairman, or stewardship committee chairman may act to resolve the difficulty without prior approval. Other leadership will be informed of these actions as soon as possible.

XI.4 Special Offerings

Special offerings may not be solicited from the church without approval of the lead pastor and stewardship committee.

XI.5 Annual Financial Review

The stewardship committee and treasurer, in consultation with the financial secretary or other appropriate staff members, will conduct an annual review of accounting procedures and financial records.

XI.6 Contracts and Employment of Agents

Except as limited by these bylaws, the lead pastor or his designee shall have the authority to enter into contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of the church, provided such contracts and instruments are in the normal course of church business and relate to accounts already approved in the church budget. All other contracts will be approved by the deacon council and stewardship committee.

XI.7 Loans

No loans will be contracted on behalf of the church without approval of the deacon council and stewardship committee.

Article XII General or Miscellaneous

XII.1 Subsidiary Ministries

The church may establish subsidiary ministries such as, but not limited to, First Steps Christian Preschool, Mothers of Preschoolers, Upward Sports, and Manchester School of the Arts, with the approval of the lead pastor and the deacon council. The director or leaders of these ministries must be members of First Baptist Church and must be elected as part of the nominating committee recommendation. Staff members of these ministries should be members of First Baptist Church if possible, however, this is not required. The beliefs and practices of these ministries and their staff must conform to those set forth in these bylaws.

XII.2 Church Missions, Ministry Centers, and Other Campuses

The church may establish missions, ministry centers, and other campuses with the recommendation of the lead pastor and the deacon council and the approval of church members as specified in Article V.5.C. The director or leaders of these ministries must be members of First Baptist Church and must be elected as part of the nominating committee recommendation. The beliefs and practices of these ministries and their staff must conform to those set forth in these bylaws.

XII.3 Ordination of Pastors

The church may ordain pastors upon recommendation of the lead pastor and deacon council. A council will be convened in which all ordained pastors and deacons are invited to participate. Upon approval of this ordination council, recommendation to ordination shall be made to the church at a member meeting, pursuant to Article V.5.C. Upon an affirmative vote, the lead pastor or his designee will schedule an ordination service.

XII.4 Approval of Curricula

All curricula used in the ministries and organizations of First Baptist Church must in accordance with Article III Beliefs and must be approved in advance by the lead pastor or his designee. Generally, the staff member in charge of adult ministry will be responsible for approving adult curricula, the staff member in charge of student ministry will be responsible for approving student curricula, and the staff member in charge of children's and preschool ministry will be responsible for approving children's and preschool curricula.

Article XIII Construction and Terms

When there is any conflict between the provisions of these Bylaws and the Charter of this church corporation, the provisions of the Charter shall govern.

Article XIV Amendments

XIV.1 Amendments to Sections I-IV

Revisions to Articles I-IV of these bylaws will be by a 75 percent vote of members voting on a Sunday morning as described in Article V.5.B. A written copy of the proposed revisions must be made available to church member through normal church communications at least thirty days before the meeting to vote. A member meeting for discussion of the proposed revisions must be held at least fourteen days before the meeting to vote.

XIV.2 Amendments to Bylaws Other Than Sections I-IV

Revisions of these bylaws other than Articles I-IV shall be by a two-thirds vote of members voting at a member meeting as described in Article V.5.C. A written copy of the proposed revisions shall be made available to church member through normal church communications at least fourteen days before the member meeting.