

CONSTITUTION
and
BYLAWS
of
CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH
LULING, TEXAS

Adopted April 21st, 2024



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CONSTITUTION

Article I: Introductory Statement

Central Baptist Church (hereafter referred to as “Church”) exists to proclaim and demonstrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to promote the Christian maturity of Church members.

Ephesians 2:19–22

So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.¹

Article II: Affiliation

This Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs under God’s leadership, independent of any denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperating with other churches in missions, this Church voluntarily cooperates with the Bluebonnet Baptist Association,² the **Southern Baptists of Texas Convention**,³ and the Southern Baptist Convention.⁴

Article III: Doctrinal Confession

The Church recognizes and confesses the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, amended in 2023, as a faithful summary of the teaching of scripture.⁵

Article IV: Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at two (2) consecutive regularly scheduled quarterly business meetings. Notice must be given of intent to make an amendment two (2) weeks prior to each meeting. After the first passing vote, the amendment shall be adopted as provisional, pending the results of the second vote for final adoption.

Article V: Parliamentary Rules

Robert’s Rules of Order (latest revised edition) is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church and for all other meetings that require a vote.

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*. 2020. La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

² Bluebonnet Baptist Association. <https://bluebonnetbaptist.org>.

³ Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. <https://sbtexas.com>.

⁴ Southern Baptist Convention. <https://www.sbc.net>.

⁵ The *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* is available to read online at <https://bfm.sbc.net>.

Article VI: Distribution of Assets

Upon dissolution, the distribution of assets shall be determined by a two-thirds vote of the members present. Notice must be given of intent to dissolve two (2) weeks prior to the vote. Assets shall go to another church or organization of like faith and mission in order to further God's kingdom.

BYLAWS

Article I: The Church's Membership

Covenant membership is a mutual commitment to encourage, support, and help one another follow Jesus. Covenant members work together to make disciples of Jesus by giving our time, talents, and treasure to serve one another and support the ministries of the Church.

Under the Lordship of Christ, the congregation retains ultimate governing authority in the Church, the Church's ministries, assets, governing documents, leaders, and all other matters.⁶

2 Chronicles 15:12

They entered into the covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and soul...

Section 1: Member Covenant

As born again, baptized members of the body of Christ, we affirm our unity to each other in Christ and commit to love one another in obedience to Him. To honor this covenant:

1. We will grow in our relationship with the Lord through regular Bible study, prayer, and fellowship (Acts 2:42; 17:11).
2. We will walk together in love as Christ commands, caring for, encouraging, and admonishing each other—rejoicing in each other's happiness and bearing each other's burdens (1 Thess 5:11).
3. We will regularly attend the Church's corporate worship and participate in the ministries of the Church (Heb 10:24–25).
4. We will work together to maintain a faithful gospel witness in our worship, ordinances (the Lord's Supper and Baptism), discipline, and doctrines.
5. We will practice joyful, faithful stewardship of all that God has generously given us (1 Cor 12–13; 1 Tim 6:17–19; Gal 6:6–10).
6. We will carry out the great commission by making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded (Matt 28:19–20).

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

⁶ See "Article VI. The Church" in the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*.

Section 2: Qualifications

Our Church receives members through one of the following:

1. Baptism through immersion as a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and an expression of intent to follow Him as a disciple.
2. Transfer of Membership from a Baptist church of like faith and practice.
3. Statement of Faith by those who have been baptized through immersion as a profession of faith in Jesus Christ but are unable to secure a letter of church membership.

The Church will provide an orientation to the Church's doctrinal confession, member covenant, and ministries.

Section 3: Receiving

New members shall be received by:

1. recommendation of the Pastoral Team on the basis of a credible profession of faith, and
2. mutual affirmation expressed by corporately reciting the Church's member covenant at a meeting of the Church.

Section 4: Removal

Members may be removed:

1. by death
2. by transfer of membership to another church
3. by removal from the Church roll at the member's request
4. by church discipline exercised according to Matthew 18:15–20, 1 Corinthians 5, and Titus 3:10–11.

Section 5: Voting

All voting shall be performed according to the procedures in Article V, Section 2.

The matters requiring a vote of Church members are as follows:

1. Approval of the annual Church operating budget.
2. Approval of pastors.
3. Approval of deacons.
4. Approval of administrative team members.
5. Approval of a Pastor Search Team.
6. Calling of a Senior Pastor candidate nominated by the Pastor Search Team.
7. Incurring any indebtedness on behalf of the Church (promissory notes, loans, etc.)
8. Acquisition or disposition of real estate by the Church.
9. Approval of changes to the Church's constitution.
10. Any non-budgeted expense that exceeds \$1,000.00.
11. Affirmation of Associate Pastors as presented by the Pastoral Team.
12. To approve the removal of a pastor if necessary.

Article II: The Church's Leadership

The biblical offices of the New Testament church are pastors (also referred to as elders, bishops, or overseers such as in Acts 20:17–28, Titus 1:5–7, and 1 Peter 5:1–3) and deacons. Pastors are God-called men recognized and ordained by the church to oversee and care for its people and ministries. Deacons are God-called servants recognized and ordained by the church to serve the church by meeting needs within the body.

Section 1: The Pastoral Team

We recognize that pastors are God's gift to his church "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12). Pastors are recognized as the under-shepherds of Jesus Christ and the spiritual leaders of the church.

a. Pastoral Covenant

As leaders appointed by the members of this Church—for the worship of God the Father, the mission of God the Son, by the power of God the Spirit—we commit to serve this Church in obedience to God. To honor this covenant:

1. We will submit ourselves to the Lord and allow His word to be the supreme authority as we care for His church (Heb 13:17; 1 Thess 5:12–13).
2. We will care for you with love, grace, and truth—seeking your growth in Christ, equipping you for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11–13).
3. We will counsel, teach, and preach from the scriptures (1 Tim 5:17; 2 Tim 4:2).
4. We will pray for you regularly, support you, and help you in times of need (Acts 6:4; Jas 5:14–18).
5. We will uphold the standards of eldership set by the scriptures (1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Pet 5:1–5).
6. We will protect the church from false teachers (Acts 20:28–31).
7. We will walk with you through correction and restoration when necessary (Matt 18:15–20; 1 Cor 5; Gal 6:1).

b. Composition

The Pastoral Team is composed of the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors, and non-paid Pastors. The team leads the body through preaching and teaching, prayer, and spiritual oversight.

c. Responsibilities

1. Preach the gospel. Pastors are called to feed God's sheep, the Church, by preaching and teaching sound doctrine (John 21:15–17; 1 Tim 4:13–16; 2 Tim 4:1–5; Titus 1:9).
2. "Equip the saints for the work of the ministry" by leading the Church in caring for members and the community (Eph 4:3).
3. Counsel those in spiritual need. Pastors must be able to comfort, rebuke, correct, encourage, and instruct those who are in spiritual need (2 Tim 4:2). Oversee the ministries of the Church by:
 - planning and coordinating a ministry of evangelism and discipleship in accordance with the Church's mission
 - supporting ministry leaders and staff as set forth in the bylaws and staff job descriptions
 - supervising and delegating responsibilities to other members of the Church
4. Present an annual budget to the Church's members in consultation with the Trustee Advisory Council and ministry leaders.
5. Maintain a working relationship with the Trustee Advisory Council by:
 - providing monthly updates of the administrative and ministry decisions made by the Pastoral Team
 - providing documentation of all administrative procedures sufficient to fulfill the day-to-day responsibilities of the Church

d. Qualifications

The pastors' qualifications must be consistent with those listed in Titus 1:5–9, 1 Timothy 3:1–7, and 1 Peter 5:1–4. These qualifications are detailed in Section 5.

e. Nomination

Any member may bring a nomination for the office of pastor to any existing member of the Pastoral Team.

Any member may be nominated to serve as pastor after one (1) year of membership. An exception may be made when hiring a Senior or Associate Pastor.

Nominations must be announced at a meeting of the Church at least fourteen (14) days prior to the call by the Church.

f. Call by the Church

The Church shall call pastors:

1. by recommendation of the Pastoral Team, and
2. by a two-thirds majority vote of the members at a meeting of the Church.

Reaffirmation. Pastors shall stand for reaffirmation every two (2) years following their call or previous reaffirmation. Reaffirmation is a vote of approval by the Church affirming the continuing call of the individual. The Senior Pastor and Associate Pastors are exempt from reaffirmation.

g. Organization

The Pastoral Team shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the Church.

One member of the Pastoral Team shall be employed by the Church as the **Senior Pastor**.

The Pastoral Team may establish ministry positions or teams to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

h. Removal

1. Resignation. Pastors should give at least two (2) weeks' notice to the Church at the time of resignation. Upon the resignation of a Senior or Associate Pastor, the remaining Pastoral Team and the Trustee Advisory Council will work out the final details of compensation for the resigning pastor (including gifts from the Church and residency in the parsonage) in a manner consistent with the Church budget or upon special approval of the Church.
2. Grievance. When a grievance exists against a pastor due to violation of the Pastor or Member Covenants or alleged conduct unbefitting a pastor according to the qualifications set forth in Section 1(d) above, such grievance may be brought to the Pastoral Team. If the Pastoral Team, after thorough investigation and consideration, finds the grievance to be true and substantial, then the call of the pastor may be terminated upon the recommendation of the Pastoral Team when approved by a two-thirds vote of the members at a meeting of the Church. After removal due to a grievance, the individual shall be disqualified from any leadership or administrative position for one (1) year, after which they must be renominated and called by the Church.
3. Lack of Reaffirmation. After removal due to lack of reaffirmation, the individual may be renominated and called by the Church.

Section 2: Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall be a member of the Pastoral Team. He shall be recognized by the Church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. He shall be responsible for:

1. the Church's public services including preaching, the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and performing other duties as usually pertain to that office
2. setting the overall vision and direction of the Church in partnership with the Pastoral Team
3. supervising and evaluating the Paid Staff
4. creating job descriptions for the Associate Pastors
5. serving as moderator for all Church business meetings unless otherwise delegated

In the absence of a Senior Pastor, his responsibilities shall be fulfilled by the remaining members of the Pastoral Team, assisted by their ministry teams, until the Senior Pastor Search Process is complete. The Pastoral Team may secure interim preachers to assist them. If there are no remaining pastors, then the Trustee Advisory Council shall cooperate with the remaining ministry teams to fulfill the administrative duties of the Senior Pastor, initiate the Senior Pastor Search Process, and secure interim preachers to lead the regular worship meetings of the Church.

a. Senior Pastor Search Process

When the Church is without a Senior Pastor, a Search Team composed of five (5) Church members (three (3) men and two (2) women) with two (2) alternates (one (1) man and one (1) woman) shall be formed with no two members of the team being from the same household.

Each Church member will be given the opportunity to nominate five (5) men and five (5) women as candidates for a Pastor Search Team. The seven (7) men and the five (5) women candidates who receive the most nominations, after approving their names to be considered as candidates, will be placed on the selection ballot for vote by the Church membership.

After the vote by the Church membership, the three (3) men and the two (2) women receiving the most votes will become the Pastor Search Team members. The man and woman receiving the next highest votes will become the alternates on the Pastor Search Team. The team shall elect its own Chairman.

The Trustees will be responsible for handling the nomination process and the counting of ballots. The Church will be notified of the Pastor Search Team members.

Section 3: Associate Pastors

Associate Pastors are paid staff members of the Pastoral Team and are subject to all relevant requirements and procedures for pastors. Additionally, Associate Pastors are an extension of the Senior Pastor's ministry and will be supervised and accountable to the Senior Pastor.

Associate Pastors will be given a job description created by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Pastoral Team.

Section 4: Deacons

The deacons shall be men who are members, demonstrate godly character, and possess particular gifts of service.

a. Qualifications

The deacons' qualifications must be consistent with those listed in 1 Timothy 3:8–13. These qualifications are detailed in Section 5.

b. Nomination

Any member may bring a nomination for the office of deacon to any existing deacon or pastor.

Any member may be nominated after one (1) year of membership.

Nominations must be announced at a meeting of the Church at least fourteen (14) days prior to the call by the Church.

c. Call by the Church

The Church shall call deacons:

1. by recommendation of the Pastoral Team, and
2. by a two-thirds majority vote by the members at a meeting of the Church.

Reaffirmation. Deacons shall stand for reaffirmation every two (2) years following their call or previous reaffirmation. Reaffirmation is a vote of approval by the Church affirming the continuing call of the individual.

d. Organization

Under the direction of the Pastoral Team, the deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to meet the needs of the Church.

The Pastoral Team or the deacons themselves should designate specific deacons or groups of deacons to serve in task-based functions.

e. Removal

1. Resignation. Deacons may resign their office at any time.
2. Grievance. When a grievance exists against a deacon due to violation of the Member Covenant or alleged conduct unbecoming a deacon according to the qualifications set forth in Section 4(a) above, such grievance may be brought to the Pastoral Team. If the Pastoral Team, after thorough investigation and consideration, finds the grievance to be true and substantial, then the call of the deacon may be terminated upon the recommendation of the Pastoral Team when approved by a two-thirds vote of the members at a meeting of the Church. After removal due to a grievance, the individual shall be disqualified from any leadership or administrative position for one (1) year, after which they must be renominated and called by the Church.
3. Lack of Reaffirmation. After removal due to lack of reaffirmation, the individual may be renominated and called by the Church.

Section 5: Qualifications

All leaders in the Church are expected to live lives consistent with the character qualifications for leaders listed in Titus 1:5–9, 1 Timothy 3:1–13, and 1 Peter 5:1–4.

Titus 1:5–9

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, namely, if any man is beyond reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of indecent behavior or rebellion. For the overseer must be beyond reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not overindulging in wine, not a bully, not greedy for money, but hospitable, loving what is good, self-controlled, righteous, holy, disciplined, holding firmly the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.

1 Timothy 3:1–13

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching, not overindulging in wine, not a bully, but gentle, not contentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil.

Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not insincere, not prone to drink much wine, not greedy for money, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These men must also first be tested; then have them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. Deacons must be husbands of one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:1–4

Therefore, I urge elders among you, as your fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and one who is also a fellow partaker of the glory that is to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not with greed but with eagerness; nor yet as domineering over those assigned to your care, but by proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Section 6: Women in Leadership

While the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by scripture, we affirm the spiritual giftedness and importance of women for the work of ministry. Therefore, under the direction of the Pastoral Team, women shall be encouraged to serve in all appropriate ministry positions and teams.

Article III: Administrative Positions

In addition to the biblical offices of church leadership described in Article II, our Church recognizes the administrative positions of Trustee, Treasurer, Teller, and Clerk.

Section 1: Common Administrative Procedures

All administrative positions have the following sections in common unless otherwise stated for specific positions.

a. Qualifications

The individuals' qualifications must be consistent with those listed in 1 Timothy 3:8–13. These qualifications are detailed in Article II, Section 5. All administrative positions are open to both men and women.

b. Nomination

Any member may bring a nomination for any administrative position to a pastor.

Any member may be nominated after one (1) year of membership.

Nominations for administrative positions must be announced at a meeting of the Church at least fourteen (14) days prior to voting to elect them into the position.

c. Election

The Church shall elect individuals into administrative positions:

1. by recommendation of the Pastoral Team, and
2. by a two-thirds majority vote by the members at a meeting of the Church.

d. Removal

Upon any removal from an administrative position, a nomination for a replacement should be sought as soon as possible.

1. Resignation. Individuals may resign their positions at any time.
2. Grievance. When a grievance exists against the individual due to violation of the Member Covenant or alleged conduct unbefitting the position according to the qualifications set forth in Section 1(a) above, such grievance may be brought to the Pastoral Team. If the Pastoral Team, after thorough investigation and consideration, finds the grievance to be true and substantial, then the individual may be removed from their position upon the recommendation of the Pastoral Team when approved by a two-thirds vote of the members at a meeting of the Church. After removal due to a grievance, the individual shall be disqualified from any leadership or administrative position for one (1) year, after which they must be renominated and elected by the Church.

Section 2: Trustee Advisory Council

a. Composition

The Trustee Advisory Council should consist of six (6) members (three (3) men and three (3) women) with no two members of the team being from the same household. They shall serve on revolving three-year terms such that each year two (2) members are replaced.

One member of the Trustee Advisory Council must be designated as **Treasurer** (see Section 3 below).

The Treasurer is exempt from the three-year rotation process. In the Treasurer's third year, only one Trustee may be replaced.

b. Responsibilities

Trustees are responsible for serving as legal representatives of the Church as directed by the Church. They represent the Church in legal transactions involving the disposition, acquisition, mortgage, purchase, and rental of property and other assets.

All documents of legal transactions must be signed by at least three (3) Trustees.

In the absence of a Senior Pastor, if there are no remaining members of the Pastoral Team, the Trustees shall oversee the nomination process for the Senior Pastor Search Team, provide guidelines to assist the search team, and secure interim preachers to lead the regular worship meetings of the Church.

c. Qualifications

Any member may serve as a Trustee but paid staff (including pastors) may not.

Trustees should be knowledgeable of legal matters and have a good understanding of general business procedures.

d. Removal

The unanticipated removal of a Trustee may leave the Trustee Advisory Council with less than the designated six (6) members. A nomination for a replacement should be sought as soon as possible.

Section 3: Treasurer

a. Responsibilities

The Treasurer is responsible for:

1. making sure all the budget items requiring disbursement are paid on time
2. examining the accuracy of the supporting data for check requests
3. providing the Pastoral Team and Trustees with financial updates as needed
4. providing the Pastoral Team with the information needed to prepare the annual Church budget
5. serving as a member of the Trustee Advisory Council
6. providing oversight and guidance to the Teller Team
7. serving as moderator of Church meetings in the absence of a Pastoral Team

b. Qualifications

Any member may serve as Treasurer, but paid staff (including pastors) may not.

c. Removal

Should the Treasurer be removed without an immediate replacement, the Trustee Advisory Council must fulfill the Treasurer's responsibilities until a new Treasurer has been elected. A nomination for a replacement should be sought as soon as possible.

Section 4: Teller Team**a. Composition**

The Teller Team should consist of at least three (3) members and is overseen by the Treasurer.

b. Responsibilities

The Teller Team is responsible for counting all monies contributed to the Church and preparing them for deposit into the bank. The Tellers shall perform their duties according to the direction of the Treasurer.

c. Qualifications

Any member may serve as a Teller, but paid staff (including pastors) may not.

Tellers should be members whose integrity, dependability, and discretion are unquestioned.

d. Removal

The unanticipated removal of a Teller may leave the Teller Team with less than the designated three (3) members. A nomination for a replacement should be sought as soon as possible.

Section 5: Clerk**a. Responsibilities**

The Clerk must record, in writing, the items discussed and the results of votes taken at Church business meetings.

Minutes of business meetings shall be recorded in the Church's official records.

Article IV: Paid Staff

Staff members are an extension of the Pastoral Team's ministry and may serve in ministerial or non-ministerial positions as needed.

Section 1: Composition

The Paid Staff consists of all persons employed by the Church and is overseen by the Senior Pastor.

Section 2: Employment

The Senior Pastor in consultation with the Pastoral Team will employ as needed such staff according to the guidelines of the Church budget and with Church approval.

The Church shall approve the hiring of staff:

1. by recommendation of the Pastoral Team, and
2. by approval of the members at a meeting of the Church.

Section 3: Removal

1. Resignation. Individuals may resign their position at any time with at least two (2) weeks' notice.
2. At will termination. The Senior Pastor has the authority to vacate staff positions upon the recommendation of the Pastoral Team.

Article V: Meetings

Section 1: Formal Meetings

The meetings of the Church are:

1. Worship. The primary meeting of the Church is the gathered corporate worship every Sunday, the Lord's Day, and throughout the week as the Church determines.
2. Business. Regular members' meetings are held at least once every quarter at some time apart from the worship service. The Church's annual budget shall be voted on at one of the quarterly meetings.

Section 2: Voting Procedure

All members 18 years or older are eligible to vote.

Matters that are voted on by the members shall be decided by a simple majority vote by those members present at the meeting unless otherwise specified in the bylaws.

A quorum shall be defined as those members who are present at a scheduled meeting.

The Senior Pastor, or whomever he designates, shall serve as moderator of the meeting of Church members.

Sensitive matters, such as the removal of leaders, shall be conducted as a closed-ballot vote. Other votes shall be open-ballot unless agreed to be closed-ballot by a simple majority vote of those present at the meeting.