

BYLAWS
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
DENTON, TEXAS

ARTICLE I
BUSINESS PROCEDURES

A. Voting Privileges

1. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given by God the Father to our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20) and therefore the work of the church is also under His ultimate authority. As a part of the universal holy priesthood of believers (I Peter 2:4-10), under the authority of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the members of this local church are delegated the collective authority to make decisions and act on this church's behalf (see Church Constitution). This is done acting in concert as a body of believers under the leadership of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 15) through the medium of church business meetings.
2. Each church member, 18 years of age and older, is entitled to one vote on all matters that come before the church for action. There is no provision for absentee or proxy voting.
3. All questions will be settled by a majority of those present and voting, except as otherwise noted in the Bylaws.

B. Business Practices

1. Quorum: One percent of the resident membership will constitute a quorum at a business meeting except for certain decisions noted in the Bylaws.
2. Quorum for Ministerial Call: Attendance of ten percent of the resident membership is required for the call of a Senior Pastor or other ministerial staff member.
3. Annual Meeting: An annual business meeting shall be held the last quarter of each fiscal year for the election of church officers and any other offices and committees of the church. The election of some officers may, at the discretion of the church, or as set forth in these Bylaws, be held at some other regular or specially called meeting.
4. Business Meetings: Church business meetings will be held on a quarterly basis and are to be scheduled one year in advance by the Church Council. Such meetings may be rescheduled by the Church Council when weather or other

emergency so requires. In questions of procedure not otherwise specified in the Bylaws or Constitution, *Robert's Rules of Order* will be the standard practice. (See Article VI, Church Constitution). The moderator may, with the consent of the majority, deviate from such rules in the interests of full discussion and harmony.

5. Special Called Business Meetings: The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of a special nature or significance. A one-week notice must be given for the called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice will include the subject, the date, the time and the place; and the notice must be given in such a manner that all resident members have a reasonable opportunity to know about the meeting which shall include notice being placed in the Sunday bulletin and the church's newsletter. A special business meeting may be called by the Senior Pastor or the Church Council.
6. Conflicts of Interest: In keeping with a spirit of transparency, all church leaders should examine themselves for potential conflicts of interest that may relate to their influence over church business matters. Examples of potential areas of conflict might include business relationships, employer/employee relationships, or family relationships. Church staff, scriptural leaders, trustees, officers, ministry leaders, committee members, and Church Council members will be expected to adhere to the following principles regarding potential conflicts of interest.
 - a. All potential conflicts of interest regarding items that may directly or indirectly affect church finances must be disclosed before discussion of an item begins or a vote is taken in a meeting.
 - b. Any church member who is concerned that a potential conflict of interest is not being addressed appropriately may bring that concern to the Church Council.
 - c. Individuals with a potential conflict of interest must recuse themselves from any vote in a meeting regarding the item in question or from unilaterally approving or disapproving that item in the course of their duties. They may speak to the issue in meetings after publicly disclosing the conflict if the deliberating body will allow it. The minutes of any such meeting must reflect the acknowledgement of such potential conflict and the actions of the individual in question with regard to that item (i.e. abstention from vote and/or discussion, etc.).
7. The Church Clerk shall keep minutes of each business meeting and preserve them when approved as part of a permanent church record. A copy of the minutes of the church shall be kept at the church office.

ARTICLE II MINISTRIES AND MEETINGS

A. Regular Worship Services

Regular worship services are scheduled weekly (normally Sunday mornings) and other times as are beneficial to the church and God's kingdom (Hebrews 10:24, 25). These meetings will be under the authority and guidance of the church's scriptural leaders as defined in Article III.

B. Business Meetings

Business meetings shall be held as set forth in Article I.B. 3-5.

C. Church Ministries

The ministries of the church will be guided by Biblical values as defined in the church mission statement. Ministries should educate, edify, and equip (Eph. 4:12) those serving and those being served to:

- a. Love God (Mt. 22:36-38); and/or
- b. Love People (Mt. 22:39) ; and/or
- c. Make Disciples (Mt. 28:19, 20); and/or
- d. Share Jesus (II Tim. 1:8).

The development and encouragement of these values shall be expressed through ministries that can be described under the general categories of:

- a. Worship and Prayer;
- b. Bible Study;
- c. Discipleship;
- d. Missions;
- e. Evangelism.

Ministries of the church shall be overseen by church leaders as defined in Article III and the Church Council.

D. Establishment of New Ministries

Members of the church are encouraged to do what they believe God has led them to do in the way of ministry in accordance with Biblical principles. In the context of the church mission and existing ministries, they are encouraged to initiate discussion of new ministries they believe will meet needs that are not currently being met. If they

feel a new ministry should become a recognized part of the church's overall ministry then the following guidelines will apply:

- a. The proposed ministry must be approved by the church if it will involve any of the following:
 1. Publicity through church publications,
 2. The use of church facilities for meetings and activities or involvement of church staff in their official capacity; or
 3. The involvement of church finances in any way.
- b. After determining that other church members are in agreement in establishing and serving in such a ministry, the concept should be actively developed and a written proposal prepared. Involved members should present the idea to the ministerial staff member who is responsible for an existing area of ministry of a similar type.
- c. In consultation with the Senior Pastor, the ministerial staff member will help determine whether the proposed new ministry should become an integral part of the existing ministry. If so, then it should be presented to the leaders of the existing ministry for discussion, approval by the church, and implementation.
- d. After discussion with the ministerial staff member, if there is agreement that the goals of the proposed ministry cannot be reached by integrating it with an existing ministry, the staff member will present the proposal to the Church Council for its review. The Church Council will review the proposal and recommend:
 1. Forwarding it to a church committee for consideration and action, leading toward a vote of approval by the church;
 2. Presenting it to the church for a vote of approval; or,
 3. Dropping consideration of the proposal as an approved program of the church.

ARTICLE III SCRIPTURAL LEADERS

A. Senior Pastor, Other Ministerial Staff, and Deacons

1. Senior Pastor

- a. The Senior Pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The Senior Pastor will lead the congregation, program organizations, and church staff and employees to perform their tasks. He will preside at meetings of the church and serve as a moderator in all business meetings.
- b. The Senior Pastor will be responsible for the supervision of the church staff. He may delegate responsibilities as he deems appropriate for effective organization and expedient operation.
- c. The Senior Pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, he works with the lay leadership and other ministerial staff to direct and equip the church in the performance of its tasks to:
 1. Engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and proclamation;
 2. Proclaim the gospel locally, nationally and worldwide to believers and unbelievers; and
 3. Minister to the church's members and other persons in the community.

2. Ministerial Staff

- a. Other ministerial staff members will be called and employed by the church as the church approves the need for such positions. (See Article III, B.2., for employment procedures of ministerial staff positions.)
- b. A personal call of God to minister must be evident in those whom a search committee recommends.

3. Deacons

a. Role

The role of deacon is a holy one that acquires its honor from service, rather than position. Deacons assist the Senior Pastor in his work, and also serve and minister to the church membership. Deacons prayerfully watch the ongoing affairs of the church and offer counsel as appropriate. (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3: 8-13)

b. Selection

Any member of the church may make a deacon nomination. Nominees for deacon are to meet the qualifications specified in Article III, B.1, of this church's Constitution and other qualifications established by the church. Those being nominated as deacons will be announced in church publications at least one week prior to the church business meeting when the deacons' recommendations will be made. At the meeting, the church will vote on which of those who are not already ordained will become candidates for ordination and which of those who have been ordained previously will become active deacons.

The church is not obligated to recognize as an active deacon one who has been a deacon in another church. However, if elected to serve as a deacon, his ordination by another Baptist church will be recognized.

Service as a deacon is generally for a lifetime, terminated only by death, transfer of membership, removal, or incapacity to serve. In the latter case, the status of "Deacon Emeritus" may be granted by the church. (See III, A.4.)

c. Selections of Officers

The deacons will elect the following officers: chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. Their term of office will be one year, with the option to be reappointed for another year.

Vacancies in any of these offices are to be filled by the majority vote of the deacon members present and voting at a deacons' meeting following the occurrence of the vacancy.

The deacons will decide on the method and timing for election of new officers.

d. Ministry Tasks

The deacons will work with the Senior Pastor and ministerial staff members in accomplishing ministry tasks including, but not limited to, those areas below. Other ministries may be undertaken by the deacons as needs are recognized.

1. Hospital Visitation: Deacons are assigned to visit hospitalized church members. This should be done on at least a weekly basis.
2. Bereavement Visitation: In concert with the church staff, deacons are assigned to minister to the bereaved of the congregation. During the

assigned period, the deacon(s) on call for this task should be available to visit in the homes of church families where a death has occurred.

3. Family Ministry: Ministry by individual deacons to older church members and others with continuing needs will be by assignment. Ministries may include (but are not limited to) special remembrances (birthday, holidays, etc...), encouragement and visitation (particularly during illnesses and/or bereavement); as well as any needed spiritual enrichment where church attendance is no longer possible.
 4. Pulpit Prayer: Deacons are assigned to lead the offertory prayer in worship services as needed. The assigned deacon should also be available to assist the Senior Pastor as needed during the worship service.
 5. Church Prospect Visitation: Deacons are assigned to contact and visit, if possible, those who are considered to be prospects for church membership, particularly those who have visited a church worship service.
 6. The Lord's Supper: Deacons are assigned to prepare and to serve the Lord's Supper.
 7. Church Council: Administer the election process including reviewing and vetting nominees to ensure qualification, conducting the election, and communicating the results to the church.
 8. Deacon Membership Committee: Develop and maintain the process for church membership, including counseling, membership classes, and verification of completion of the membership process prior to presentation to church for membership.
- e. The Deacon Chairman will be responsible for leading and organizing the deacons to fulfill their role as stated in A.3.a above. Following election, the incoming chairman will promptly appoint chairmen and members for the appropriate ministry teams, the standing Membership Committee, and other organizational committees that he deems necessary. The terms of office will be one year (normally beginning in January), but individuals may be reappointed to more than one term. Vacancies in any of these positions may be filled by appointment at any time by the Deacon Chairman.

4. Deacon Emeritus

Any deacon who has faithfully served as a deacon for many years may, because of age or infirmity, be recommended to the church by the deacons for recognition as “Deacon Emeritus.” This position may be held for the lifetime of the deacon with all rights and privileges that would be accorded active deacons.

5. The Ordination of Candidates for the Ministry and Deacons

- a. Licensing and ordaining of ministers and ordaining of deacons will be under the authority of the church and joint leadership of the Senior Pastor and deacons.
- b. When a member or former member of the church gives evidence of a call of God to the ministry, and that person has been asked to assume a definite role of ministry requiring ordination or making ordination advisable, and that person requests ordination from the church, the Senior Pastor will confer with the deacons to determine if a recommendation should be made to the church concerning this request. If such a recommendation is to be made, it will be announced in church publications at least one week prior to the church business meeting when the recommendation will be made. At the meeting the church will vote on whether to designate the person as a candidate for ordination.
- c. The Ordination Procedure for Ministers and Deacons
 1. At the ordination service, those being ordained will share with the congregation their testimony concerning the work of God in their lives, both in bringing them into a personal relationship with Him and in leading them to the decision to be available for ordination.
 2. The church will then vote on whether or not to proceed with the ordination.

B. Ministry Staff Positions and the Search Process

1. The Senior Pastor

- a. When the pastorate becomes vacant, a Senior Pastor Search Committee of eight members and two alternates will be elected by the church. The Church Council, Committee on Committees and the Personnel Committee will prepare a list of at least 30 nominees for the search committee. The nominees will be representative of a wide cross-section of church membership. In addition, the nominations should not include persons

currently serving or who have served on a pastor or ministerial staff search committee within the past two years. The persons under consideration will be contacted and must agree to serve if elected.

- b. The congregation will be provided a list of nominees by means of church publications at least 1 week in advance of the regular or special business meeting when the election will be held.
- c. The ballot sheets will then be collected and tabulated. Personnel Committee members will be responsible for tallying the votes, but they may recruit members to assist. The search committee members will be determined by listing them in descending order on the basis of the number of votes for each of the nominees.

After eight have been identified, the two with the next highest number of votes will become alternates to fill a vacancy, should a vacancy occur on the Search Committee. The Search Committee has the discretion to determine if they desire for an alternate to join them in the search process. The alternate who received the most votes will be the first to be asked to join the Search Committee if the decision is made to fill a vacancy.

- d. The Personnel Committee chairman will contact the newly elected search committee members to arrange an organizational meeting. From time to time during the search period the Senior Pastor Search Committee chairman will be expected to report progress to the church.
- e. After the committee has narrowed its search to one candidate, the Chairman of the Deacons, and the Church Council, Finance, and the Personnel Committee chairpersons will participate in the search committee's final conference(s) with the candidate and in the deliberations to develop a salary and benefits proposal.
- f. The Senior Pastor Search Committee will recommend only one candidate at a time to the church for consideration.
- g. The vote to extend a call will take place at a meeting called for that purpose. At least one week's notice must be given of the meeting through public announcements at prior services and in church publications, and background information on the candidate will be made available as soon as reasonably possible before this called meeting.

- h. Elections will be by ballot. Provided the number present meets the quorum requirements as stated in Article I, B, an affirmative vote of the majority of those voting will result in the issuing of a call.

The candidate will be given the information about the number of votes for and against the issuing of the call.

- i. While the pastorate is vacant, the Personnel Committee will be responsible for enlisting speakers to supply the pulpit and recommending to the church the calling of an interim pastor.

2. Ministerial Staff Positions

- a. Regarding Ministerial Staff positions, when a vacancy occurs or when the church, under God's leadership, perceives the need to add a new position or eliminate an existing position, a study of that position will be made by the Personnel Committee in consultation with the Senior Pastor (or his designee). The Personnel Committee will then make a report and recommendation to the church. Church approval by vote will be required before eliminating a position or before beginning the search process for either an existing vacant position or a new position. Notice of the proposed vote and a job description adopted by the committee will be placed in church publications at least one week prior to the vote. After church approval is obtained, the process for new or vacant positions will be as follows:
 - 1. The size of the search committee for any ministerial staff member will be determined by the Personnel Committee.
 - 2. The Committee on Committees will select the members of the search committee. One member of the Personnel committee will be included on the search committee.
 - 3. The search committee designation will be Minister of _____ depending on the position being filled.
 - 4. The Personnel Committee chairman will contact the newly-elected search committee members to arrange an organizational meeting. From time to time during the search period the Search Committee chairman will be expected to report progress to the church.

- b. Composition of the search committee
 1. In the committee selection process, the selections should not ignore general church representation, but should draw heavily from the ministerial area. For example, the committee searching for a Minister of Youth should have strong representation from members involved in the youth ministry.
 2. The Senior Pastor will serve as an ex-officio member of any Ministerial Staff Search Committee.
 3. Selections should not include persons currently serving or who have served on a pastor or ministerial staff search committee within the past two years.
- c. Once the committee has narrowed its search to one candidate, the recommendation process will be the same as that for a Senior Pastor. (See B.1.e through h)

C. Vacancies in Positions

1. The Senior Pastor

- a. The Senior Pastor may resign at any time by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church.
- b. The position of Senior Pastor may be declared vacant by the church. This action may only take place at a meeting called for that purpose. Such meeting may be held only after public notice has been given at regular services and in church publications at least one week prior to the meeting time. The notice must include as a minimum the time, place, and the purpose of the meeting.
 1. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of individual votes of specially called meetings of each of the following: Church Council, Personnel Committee and the deacons; or by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the resident church members. The moderator for such a meeting is to be selected by a majority vote of those members present, and will be someone other than the Senior Pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant will be by ballot; an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present is necessary to declare the office vacant. The termination will become effective immediately.

2. Compensation - Except in the instance of gross misconduct by the Senior Pastor so removed from office, the church will compensate the Senior Pastor with not less than one-twelfth of his total annual compensation. The compensation will be rendered within 30 days. Any severance arrangement will be presented to the church by the the Personnel Committee for approval.

2. Ministerial Staff

- a. A vacancy in a ministerial staff position may occur in the same way as for the Senior Pastor: by resignation, with at least two weeks' notice, or by being declared vacant by the church. In declaring a vacancy, the precise procedures detailed for declaring the pastorate vacant are to be followed, except the Senior Pastor may serve as moderator for the meeting. The procedures are detailed in Article III, C.1.b.1.
- b. Compensation for a ministerial staff member whose position has been declared vacant will be decided on the same basis as that stated for the Senior Pastor in Article III, C.1.b.2.

ARTICLE IV NON-MINISTERIAL STAFF

A. Church Staff

The church staff shall be composed of all persons employed by the church except the ministerial staff and the Senior Pastor. Members of the church staff shall be employed or terminated by action of the Personnel Committee with the agreement of the Senior Pastor.

B. General Provisions

A job description for each staff position shall be prepared and shall be revised periodically by the Senior Pastor and the Personnel Committee and given to all candidates being considered for that position or to the person filling that position. Staff positions may be combined from time to time at the discretion of the Senior Pastor and the Personnel Committee, and the combined position held by one person. All members of the staff shall be called or employed for indeterminate terms. A staff member may resign by giving thirty (30) days' written notice of termination to the church. The relationship of a staff member to the church may be terminated by the church at any time by action of the body or committees authorized to elect or terminate that staff member. The church shall for all staff positions establish appropriate employment policies including job descriptions, benefits, and

other policies. Such policies shall not constitute an employment contract and may be terminated or modified at any time by appropriate church action.

ARTICLE V
CHURCH TRUSTEES, OFFICERS, & MINISTRY LEADERS

A. Elections

1. Except for the moderator, all church trustees, officers and ministry leaders will be elected by the church for one year terms and are eligible for reelection. A majority vote of church members present will elect.
2. Recognizing that the position of trustee, officer, and ministry leader requires a demonstrated commitment to the life of the church, any individuals nominated for the position of clerk or treasurer must be a resident member for at least three years immediately before assuming the elected position. Eligibility to serve as trustee requires at least five years of resident membership immediately before assuming such role.
3. Nominees for church trustees, officers and ministry leaders (“Nominees”) should be publicized by the Committee on Committees at least 30 days prior to the annual business meeting (Article 1.B.3).
4. Nominees will be presented by the Committee on Committees for election at the annual business meeting for a vote by the church before assuming or re-assuming their responsibilities.

B. Trustees

1. At least four trustees will be elected by the church to serve as legal officers and act for the church in legal matters. They shall hold the church property in the corporate name of the church. Upon specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property, but not otherwise.
2. When the signatures of the trustees are required, they are to sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase or rental of real property or other legal documents related to church approved matters. The signature of three trustees will be required on any such document.
3. Nominations of trustees will be made by the Committee on Committees.
4. Trustees shall serve until their resignation, removal, death, or until their successor is elected.

5. Trustees may be removed by church vote in a business meeting. Trustees may also be suspended on an emergency basis by the Church Council. Any such suspension will be temporary until confirmed by church vote. Such vote should take place at a business meeting as soon as reasonably possible. Grounds for suspension or removal include:
 - a. Incompetence,
 - b. Conviction of a felony,
 - c. Failure to act in agreement with a church vote,
 - d. Taking actions as trustee that were not approved by the church,
 - e. No longer attending church services at our church on a regular basis.
6. Any vacancy in the trustees will be filled as soon as possible by church vote at a regular business meeting. If the position needs to be urgently filled, then it can be filled at a specially called business meeting.

C. Church Officers

1. Moderator: The Moderator for church business meetings will be the Senior Pastor. In the absence of the Senior Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons will serve as Moderator. In the absence of both the Senior Pastor and the Chairman of the Deacons, the Church Clerk will call the meeting to order and a Moderator Pro-Tem will be elected.
2. Clerk: The Church Clerk will take written minutes of all church business meetings and submit them to the church office to be added to the permanent record.
3. Treasurer: The Treasurer will work with the Finance Committee to assist the Church Council in providing oversight of the church's finances. The Treasurer may attend Finance Committee meetings and will have complete access to the church's books, financial records, and financial staff. The Treasurer, along with the Finance Committee, will determine the necessity for an audit. In the event it is determined that an audit should be conducted, the Treasurer and Finance Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the audit is completed and that the audit report is communicated and considered by the church on a timely basis. The Treasurer will have input into the financial policies and procedures designed by the Finance Committee. The Treasurer will have check signing authority. The Treasurer should be someone with sufficient financial background to understand proper accounting procedures.

D. Ministry Leaders

Ministry Leaders are resident members who serve as non-staff and non-pastoral leaders of ministries such as the Jail Ministry, International Ministry and the Singles Ministry. They will report to the ministerial staff of the church.

E. Access to the Church Council

All church trustees, officers and ministry leaders will have access to the Church Council to discuss matters regarding the church.

ARTICLE VI CHURCH COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS

A. Types of Church Committees

1. Standing Committees

- a. Standing committees are permanent committees of the church with rotating members. All members are elected annually but may serve on a given standing committee up to three years sequentially. Standing Committees are responsible for developing policies & plans for their areas of responsibility and monitoring the execution of those policies and plans in partnership with ministry staff. The Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, and the Committee on Committees will be initially defined as the Standing Committees of the church.
- b. A member of any Standing Committee may not serve simultaneously on another Standing Committee or as an at-large member of the Church Council but may serve on other committees.
- c. Standing Committees should be composed of either six or nine members. 1/3 of members will be designated to serve 1 year, 1/3 of members will be designated to serve 2 years, and 1/3 of the members to serve 3 years in order to allow for ongoing continuity.

2. Ministry Committees

- a. These committees are defined as ongoing church committees that do not meet the above definition of Standing Committees. They may be formed in response to an ongoing service or ministry need. Members are elected by the church to a three (3) year term, subject to annual reelection. Members may serve any number of consecutive terms on ministry committees, subject to renomination by the Committee on Committees and reelection by the church.

- b. Ministry committees should be composed of either six or nine members. 1/3 of members will be designated to serve 1 year, 1/3 of members will be designated to serve 2 years, and 1/3 of the members to serve 3 years in order to allow for ongoing continuity.

3. Special Committees

- a. Special committees may be approved by the church to perform a specific task, e.g., to plan a special celebration or to revise the Bylaws. These committees are time-limited by their nature and members serve for the life of the committee.

- B. Authorization, Functions, and Training of Committees

1. Standing Committees are defined in these Bylaws and as such are not subject to yearly reauthorization.
2. Ministry Committees and Special Committees may be added or deleted by church vote. The continuing need for existing committees or the need for new committees should be reviewed at least annually by the Committee on Committees with input from current committee members, church members involved in affected ministries, staff members, and Church Council as needed. The Committee on Committees will make a recommendation to the church regarding any such vote, including proposed functions, duties, and areas of responsibility for new committees and any requests for changes in these parameters for existing committees.

Newly formed Ministry and Special Committees may begin their work prior to church approval if necessary but should be brought to the church for approval at the next business meeting or as soon as reasonably possible.

3. Standing Committee Functions:

- a. Finance Committee: work with the Senior Pastor or his designee, Ministry Staff, and the Treasurer to insure that church financial resources are managed prudently and that the church conducts its financial business with Christian integrity, with attention to applicable laws, and according to Article I.A.6 (conflict of interest provisions), Article XI, Article XII, and any other relevant portions of these Bylaws.
- b. Personnel Committee: work with the Senior Pastor or his designee to insure that church personnel matters are managed prudently and that the church conducts its personnel business with Christian integrity, with

attention to applicable laws, and according to Article I.A.6 (conflict of interest provisions), Article III, Article IV, and Article XII, and any other relevant portions of these Bylaws.

- c. Committee on Committees: work with the Senior Pastor or his designee to establish appropriate committee qualifications beyond those stated in these Bylaws, to recruit and present qualified nominees to the church for committee assignments; nominate members to replace vacancies as needed; and work with Committee Chairmen to insure appropriate committee training, according to Article I.A.6 (conflict of interest provisions), Article VI and any other relevant portions of these Bylaws.
4. At least one Ministry Staff member will be assigned as a liaison to each Standing and Ministry committee. Committee Chairpersons and Committee on Committees shall be responsible for insuring that appropriate training for committee members is provided.

C. Elections, Terms of Service, Extensions & Vacancies

1. Election Procedures: The Committee on Committees will present a slate of qualified nominees for all standing and ministry committee personnel at a business meeting before the beginning of each new church calendar year (see Article I.B.3). The list of nominees must be made public at least two weeks before final vote at said business meeting. Majority vote of church members present is required for approval of committee members.
2. Qualifications: All Ministry Committee members must have been a resident member of this church for at least one year. Members of Standing Committees must have been resident members for at least three years.
3. Extensions: When unusual circumstances indicate the need for a member to remain on a Standing Committee after their three year term limit has expired, the Committee on Committees may approve a request for an exception. The request must include the reason for extension. Extensions allowed under this exception may be for a maximum of one year.
4. Vacancies: The Committee on Committees will nominate individuals for vacancies that occur during the year. These nominations will be presented for church vote as soon as reasonably possible at a church business meeting as per Section C.1.B above. New members may serve on a temporary basis pending confirmation by church vote.

D. Church Council

1. Background, Definition, and Purpose

Administrative and executive leadership within the church is shared in a partnership between three primary groups: the Senior Pastor/Ministry Staff, the Standing Committees, and the Church Council. The Deacons also serve as de-facto church leaders through their dual roles of 1) ministry to the church body and 2) assistance to the Senior Pastor and church staff in meeting the ongoing needs of the church, as defined elsewhere in these Bylaws, but their responsibilities are service-oriented rather than administrative/executive.

Roles and responsibilities of the Senior Pastor, Ministry Staff and Standing Committees are defined elsewhere in these Bylaws in more detail, but a general, non-exhaustive summary of their roles with respect to the Church Council follows:

- The Senior Pastor and Ministry Staff members are responsible for ensuring that those in their spheres of church responsibility are effectively shepherded and equipped for ministry. In addition to personal ministry, this includes prayerfully developing and proposing appropriate leadership initiatives such as long-term vision, goals, objectives, and strategy, subject to oversight by their staff supervisor and the church.
- Standing Committees are responsible for developing policies & plans for their areas of responsibility and monitoring the execution of those policies and plans in partnership with ministry staff. (See Article VI.A.1)

The Church Council is a group of church members who together with the Senior Pastor, Ministry Staff, Committees, and Deacons are responsible for guarding the integrity of the mission, vision, and programs of the church.

In partnership with the Senior Pastor/Ministry Staff and Standing Committees, the Church Council will prayerfully exercise servant leadership through the provision of advice, oversight, and accountability for all of church life, subject to the overall authority of the church body as described in background above.

1. **ADVICE** - pray alongside, provide counsel, encourage discussion and debate, make recommendations for plans, practices and best courses of action. Examples:

- a. Participate in planning and coordinating church-wide programs and emphases.
 - b. Serve as an advisory board to the Ministry Staff.
 - c. Recommend to the church suggested objectives and church goals.
2. **OVERSIGHT** - provide “watchful and responsible care” for the church and its other leaders. Examples:
- a. Guard church unity by proactively addressing potentially divisive church issues. Examples might include hearing concerns of church members and mediating conflicts between church organizations (such as committees) or church members (including ministry and support staff).
 - b. Review and coordinate ministry and program plans recommended by ministry staff.
 - c. Confer and coordinate with ministry staff to annually set in advance and publicize dates of regular church business meetings and major church calendar items.
 - d. Conduct ongoing, regular reviews of all other facets of church life, including but not limited to: (the following items must be reviewed at least yearly)
 1. Staff: ministry activities & accomplishments, progress toward ministry goals, work plans and schedules
 2. Committees: actions taken, policies and plans, committee effectiveness,
 3. Church objectives and goals as represented in the church Mission Statement
3. **ACCOUNTABILITY** - may be defined as “the obligation of an individual or organization to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner.” The Church Council will encourage accountability of members (including church leaders) and organizations to the church body under the authority of the Holy Spirit by actions including but not limited to the following:

- a. Communicate regularly to the church body, including presentation of a Council report to the church at each regularly scheduled business meeting by one or more members.
 - b. Require Standing Committee representation at each regularly scheduled business meeting.
 - c. Bring issues to a church business meeting as the Council deems necessary. The Council has sole authority to decide on the content and manner of presentation of its business items and to place them on the agenda. No individual church member, staff member, church committee or other entity has the authority to override the Council on this issue.
 - d. In consultation with other church leaders, including the Senior Pastor, recommend member disciplinary actions to the church.
2. Composition of Church Council: 11 total members
 - a. Two (2) ex officio members without voting rights
 - Senior Pastor and/or his Ministerial Staff designee (at least one of these should be present for each meeting)
 - b. Four (4) members by virtue of other elected church position
 - Deacon Chair or other representative chosen by the Deacons
 - Chair of Finance Committee
 - Chair of Personnel Committee
 - Chair of Committee on Committees
 - c. Five (5) at-large members
 1. At-large members are to be nominated by the church body. Their qualifications and willingness to serve will be vetted by the Deacons, who will then supervise an election by the church body. A written ballot with the names of all vetted and qualified nominees will be used. The 5 candidates receiving the most votes will become at-large Council members. The remaining candidates will be ranked by number of votes received and that list recorded for use in the event of vacancies for un-expired terms. Tie votes will be resolved by the Deacons as needed.

2. To create staggered terms, initially the 3 elected members ranked highest by votes received will serve 3-year terms and the 2 remaining elected members will serve 2-year terms. Thereafter, all at-large members will serve 3-year terms. Terms will expire at the end of the calendar year following completion of a full term.
 3. At-large vacancies that occur before a member's full term expires are to be filled by the candidate next on the list from the most recent election, or, if that person is no longer qualified or willing, the next candidate on the list. New members added in this manner will serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. All full-term vacancies will be filled with a new at-large election. Members may serve a maximum of 2 consecutive full terms before rotating off the Council.
 4. The Council Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected by the Council and must both be at-large members. The Council Chair (or in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair) will be responsible for calling and moderating Council meetings.
 5. Qualifications for at-large members:
 - a. A mature Christian at least 25 years of age having undergone believer's baptism as per our Bylaws and at least 5 years as a resident member of FBCD in good standing;
 - b. a lifestyle manifesting fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23);
 - c. a demonstrated record of service and of consistent ongoing financial support to the budget of this church;
 - d. not a paid staff member/employee;
 - e. not a current or incoming member of the Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, or Committee on Committees.
3. Membership & Meeting Requirements
- a. Meeting frequency:

The Council shall meet at least bi-monthly (every 2 months) but may meet more often as it deems necessary.

- b. Meeting attendance:
1. 6 of 9 voting members will constitute a quorum.
 2. Any at-large member who misses 3 consecutive meetings OR more than 1/3 of yearly meetings will be automatically removed and replaced with the next alternate from the previous election. The Council may vote to suspend this requirement in the case of extenuating circumstances.
 3. Members who serve by virtue of their position as a Standing Committee Chair will be subject to the same attendance requirements as an at-large member, except he or she may send the Vice-Chair of his/her Standing Committee as a substitute for as many as 1/3 of total yearly Council meetings. If a member in this category is removed for non-attendance the affected Standing Committee shall appoint a replacement.
 4. The Deacon Representative will be subject to the same attendance requirements as an at-large member unless the Deacon Chair is also the Deacon Representative, in which case he may send the Deacon Vice-Chair as a substitute for as many as 1/3 of total yearly Council meetings. If a member in this category is removed for non-attendance the Deacons shall appoint a replacement.

ARTICLE VII CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. Membership

1. The members of this church will consist only of those persons who have made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and have subsequently been biblically baptized by immersion according to the beliefs and practices of this church. The collective church membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who will be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.
2. Resident members are those who live close enough to the church building(s) to attend regularly. Nonresident members are those who have moved away from

the area of the church building(s) and have not moved their church membership or those whose address is unknown.

B. Presentation and Acceptance For Membership

1. Persons may present themselves as candidates for membership in this church in any of the following ways:
 - a. by profession of faith in Jesus Christ and requesting baptism by this church;
 - b. by transfer of membership from another Baptist church;
 - c. by personal statement of previous conversion experience and requesting baptism by this church (unless previously baptized by immersion in another church that agrees with this church's beliefs regarding the meaning and method of baptism);
 - d. by request made publicly to the congregation for restoration following evidence of correction of the reason(s) for prior removal from membership (see Article VI, Section F, #2); or
 - e. in absentia, presented by a family member or close friend (only for those who cannot reasonably present themselves for membership).
2. Persons presenting themselves for membership will be interviewed by the Senior Pastor, Deacons, or their designees and will be asked to share their testimony of their conversion experience. All candidates must either confirm their previous baptism by immersion in a church that agrees with the beliefs of this church regarding the meaning and method of baptism or be baptized by this church before being accepted into membership. The membership process will be supervised and administered by the Membership Committee (a standing committee of the deacons) in consultation with the Senior Pastor and Deacons.
3. All candidates for membership will be directed to the Membership Class, which will be conducted by the Senior Pastor, Deacons, or their designees under the supervision and administration of the Deacon Membership Committee. Content of the class will include core church beliefs and values, membership expectations and obligations, available training and service opportunities, and other relevant items determined by the Membership Committee in consultation with the Senior Pastor and Deacons. Personal attendance and completion of the entire class is required for all candidates except members in absentia.

4. The names of prospective members will be made available to the church body promptly upon enrollment in the Membership Class. Any legitimate questions or concerns about a candidate should be discussed with the Senior Pastor (or his designee) before presentation of the prospective member. The reasons set forth for questioning will then be investigated for validity by the Senior Pastor (or his designee) and the Deacons. If the investigation determines there is still cause for concern, the matter will be presented to a church business meeting before the candidate is publicly presented as described in this Article, Section B, item #6 below. In such case a vote of at least three-fourths of those church members present and voting will be required for acceptance as a member.
5. After completion of the Membership Class, prospective members will be asked to affirm by signature their understanding of the class content and the requirements for membership, their continued desire to become members of this church, and their commitment to fulfilling the membership covenant contained in the Church Constitution to the best of their ability in Christ.
6. After affirming the membership covenant, prospective members will be publicly presented to the church to allow expression of fellowship and welcome. Presentation in person at a regular Sunday worship service is preferable but may occur via pictorial presentation if necessary. Procedures for presentation of prospective members shall be established by the Deacon Membership Committee. Acceptance of prospective members is not complete until confirmed at a church business meeting by a majority vote of current members present and voting. However, for those members who are being considered under the process described in this Article, Section B, Item #4 above, a three-fourths majority vote will be required.

7. In summary, the process by which a non-member transitions into church membership requires completion of all of the following steps:

- a. Profession of faith in Jesus Christ
- b. Believer's baptism by immersion
- c. Membership Class completion
- d. Written Covenant commitment
- e. Public presentation
- f. Church vote of acceptance as a member

C. Responsibilities and Privileges of Membership

1. Primary responsibilities of members are to:

- a. Be faithful in the Christian life as outlined in the membership Covenant (see Church Constitution);
- b. Participate in the corporate life of the church, including but not limited to: attending worship services and member meetings, supporting church needs through prayer, monetary offerings, and voluntary service, and using individual spiritual gifts to build up the church (Heb. 10:24-25, 1 Cor. 14:12, 1 Thess. 5:17, Luke 6:38, 2 Cor. 9:7, Prov. 3:9, Matt. 18:15-20);

2. Church membership is required:

- a. to participate and vote in church business meetings;
- b. to hold a teaching position in any church organization;
- c. to hold any of the offices described in Articles III (Scriptural Leaders), IV (Church Trustees, Officers, and Program Leaders, or V (Committees and Councils) of these Bylaws.

3. Church membership is NOT required:

- a. to participate in any activity of the church or its organizations (except for member business meetings);
- b. to host an organizational meeting; or

- c. to hold a (non-teaching) service position in an organization whose officers are not elected by the church, such as a Bible study class.

D. Watch Care

Individuals who for valid reasons do not wish to become members of this church but desire to be under the spiritual care and nurture of this body of believers may, after consultation with the Senior Pastor and a deacon assigned this responsibility, present themselves requesting “watch care” association with the church. However, unless there are extenuating circumstances, adult Christians should be encouraged to pursue full membership instead.

E. Termination Of Membership

Membership will be terminated in one of the following ways:

1. by transfer of membership to another Baptist Church;
2. by death of the member;
3. by exclusion as a result of specific action of this church;
4. by erasure, upon request or by proof of membership in another church;
5. by erasure, for consistent, long-term absence from church life including worship services without valid reasons, if the deacons and Senior Pastor after appropriate investigation recommend such and the church so votes.

F. Discipline

1. In matters of church discipline, the basic plan of action of this church will be to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Senior Pastor, other Ministerial Staff members, and deacons will be available for counsel and guidance. Redemptive rather than punitive action in Christian love will be the motivating factor governing the relationships between members.
2. Should some serious circumstance arise which would, in the discretion of the Senior Pastor, Church Council, and deacons, cause a church member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the Senior Pastor, other Ministerial Staff members, Church Council, and the deacons to resolve the problem in keeping with Biblical principles such as those outlined in Matt. 18, 1 Cor. 5:1-11, Gal. 6:1, 1 Tim 5:19-20, and Titus 3:9-11. All such proceedings will be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and

forbearance. However, if the Senior Pastor, Ministerial Staff, Church Council, and deacons come to an agreement that the welfare of the church and/or the member would best be served by the exclusion of the member, the church may agree to exclude the member by a vote of at least three-fourths of the members present and voting at a regular or special business meeting of the church called for this purpose; and the church may then proceed to declare the person no longer to be a member.

G. Implementation

The deacons and the Senior Pastor will be responsible for the implementation and interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws sections on membership. Since not every situation can be anticipated, the church members will expect the deacons and the Senior Pastor to carry out these provisions consistently, according to Biblical principles and their intended purposes.

ARTICLE VIII BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

Marriage is a Biblical institution established by God as described in Scripture. We believe Biblical marriage can only occur between one man and one woman. This church recognizes that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment. Accordingly, this church's pastors and staff will not officiate in any type of marriage or union that does not meet this Biblical definition, nor will its property or resources be used for such purposes.

ARTICLE IX ORDINANCES

A. Baptism

Baptism is an act of obedience and worship that demonstrates a person's decision to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. In following Christ's example, this church will practice baptism by immersion which symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. (Mark 1:9-11, Acts 8:35-38)

B. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is an act of obedience and worship that serves as a reminder of Christ's sacrificial death for our sins. It will be observed by our church at least quarterly with the deacon body taking responsibility to prepare and serve the elements. (Matthew 26:26-29, I Corinthians 11:23-26)

**ARTICLE X
COOPERATION**

The church will send messengers to the meetings of the Denton Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and the Southern Baptist Convention. Messengers will be approved by the church at a business meeting.

**ARTICLE XI
FINANCES****A. Budget**

The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an annual budget.

B. Accounting Procedures

All funds for any and all purposes shall be handled in accordance with procedures established by the Finance Committee, be reported to the church treasurer or financial secretary, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.

C. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall run from January to December.

D. Expenditures and Receipts of Funds

1. No funds shall be disbursed without the express authorization of the church as provided for in the budget or separate authorization.

2. No designated funds shall be received except where the church has approved the receipt of funds for the designated cause. Separate accounting shall be maintained for all designated gifts and funds.
3. The receipt of gifts of real or personal property must be approved by the appropriate church authorities.
4. All gifts of money or other items shall be used solely at the discretion of the church, subject only to such restrictions on the use of gifts which are designated to a church-approved fund, and as may be made at the time of their receipt.

E. Offerings

Opportunity will be given for the congregation to give tithes and offerings to the church.

F. Contracts

All contractual agreements with total value over \$1000 will be approved by both a ministry staff member and the Finance Committee.

G. Audits

A financial audit will be performed at least once every 3 fiscal years. The Finance Committee and the Treasurer will yearly evaluate and determine the need for an audit and will also be responsible for insuring that audits are completed and the results communicated to the church (Bylaws Article V.C.3).

ARTICLE XII CHURCH POLICY MANUAL

The Senior Pastor and his staff designee shall assure the creation and maintenance of a policies and procedures/operations manual which shall contain all currently controlling policies and procedures governing any aspect of the church's affairs, including policies regarding the handling of funds, use of facilities, and employment policies and practices.

**ARTICLE XIII
AMENDMENTS**

A. Amendments to the Bylaws may be made at any business meeting of the church, provided each amendment will have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the amendment will have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting; provided, however, that the foregoing notice requirements shall not prohibit the members from adopting the proposed amendment, effecting the proposed repeal, or adopting the proposed new Bylaws, as the case may be, in a modified form which is not identical to that described or set forth in the notice of such meeting. Amendments to the Bylaws will require the approval of a majority of the voting members present.

B. Copies

A copy of these Bylaws and amendments thereto shall be maintained by the Church Clerk and copies made available at the church office.