

**BYLAWS**  
(Adopted March 26, 2008)

**ARTICLE I. Church Membership**

**A. Candidacy**

A person may offer him or herself as a candidate for membership in one of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior and Lord and by submission as a candidate for baptism;
2. By promise of a letter from another Baptist Church of like faith and order;
3. By statement, if he or she is or was a member of a Baptist Church of like faith and order and his or her records, for any reasonable cause, are no longer available, or if he or she is a member of a Church of another denomination, has like faith, and has been baptized by immersion; or
4. In absentia, either by letter or by statement.

**B. Watchcare**

For those who are members of any Christian Church but are in need of a Church home and wish to affiliate with this Church, but not become a member, a watchcare program is available. The Church will care for the spiritual needs of these individuals and will serve as their Church home. Watchcare affiliates may not vote or hold elected offices in the Church.

**C. Privileges of Members**

1. Every member of the Church is entitled to vote in all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church in conference, provided the member is present or special provision has been made by the Church for absentee balloting.
2. Every member of the Church who has been a member for six months is eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for a leadership position in the Church, having met the criteria established for that position.
3. Every member of the Church may participate in the ordinances of the Church as administered by the Church.

**D. Termination of Membership:** Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. By death of the member;
2. By transfer of letter to another Baptist Church;
3. By exclusion by action of the Church; or
4. By erasure upon request of member or proof of membership in a Church of another denomination.

**E. Discipline**

1. It shall be the practice of this Church to demonstrate Christian love by taking every reasonable measure to assist any troubled member. The pastor, staff, or deacons are available to listen and to guide. Redemption rather than punishment shall be the guideline that governs the attitude of one member toward another.
2. Should some serious condition exist that would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the Church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor, other members of the Church staff, and by the deacons to resolve the problems, following the method of restoration described in Mathew 18:15-17. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the welfare of the Church will be best served by exclusion of the member, the Church will take this action by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at a special business meeting called for this purpose and the Church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the Church.
3. Upon the excluded member's request, and the demonstration of his or her repentance and reformation, he or she may be restored to membership by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at a special business meeting called for this purpose.

**ARTICLE II. Church Officers, Staff, Committees, Task Forces, and Teams**

All who serve as officers of the Church and those who serve as voting members of Church committees and leaders of ministry support teams shall be members of the Church.

## **A. Church Officers**

The officers of the Church shall be the pastor, the ministerial staff, a clerk, and trustees. Individual job descriptions of these officers are contained herein or in the *Church Personnel Handbook*.

### **1. Pastor**

#### **a. Pastor's Responsibilities**

The pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function in keeping with New-Testament principles. The pastor will lead the congregation, the Church organizations, and the Church staff to perform their tasks according to the covenant, ministries, mission statement, core values, goals, and priorities adopted by the Church.

#### **b. Pastor Position Vacant**

The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by giving at least two weeks notice to the Church at the time of resignation, or the pastor may be terminated by dismissal.

At a special business meeting announced in the Church newsletter at least one week prior to the date of the meeting, in accordance with Article VI. D., the Church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant and the pastor's ministry relationship with this congregation terminated. The moderator for this meeting shall be the chairperson of the Deacon Council.

In the event of dismissal, the vote to dismiss shall be by secret ballot, and the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present shall be necessary to dismiss and the pastor's ministry relationship with this congregation thereby terminated. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor, upon the Church's dismissing the pastor, the Church will compensate the pastor with no less than one-twelfth of the pastor's total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered at the time of dismissal.

#### **c. Pastor Search Committee**

A pastoral candidate shall be recommended by a Pastor Search Committee and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs.

The Pastor Search Committee shall be elected by the Church, by ballot, in a Sunday morning worship service. Notice of the election shall be in the Church newsletter at least one week prior to the vote. The election shall be

supervised and votes counted by the Committee on Committees. This committee shall consist of seven members; each gender will have a minimum of three representatives. Staff members or their spouses may not serve on the committee, and no committee member may be related to another committee member as husband and wife, as parent and child, or as sibling. The committee will elect its own chairperson and vice chairperson.

The Pastor Search Committee will be trained by a professional in that field. If more than two members of the Pastor Search Committee resign after the training, the committee may recommend to the Church that the committee be dissolved and reformed using the Pastor Search Committee selection process established by these Bylaws. The Church will pay all expenses incurred by the Pastor Search Committee and the expenses involved in bringing pastoral candidates in view of call. After reviewing resumes of candidates and checking backgrounds, references and qualifications, and preparing a salary and benefits package in conjunction with the Finance Committee, the Pastor Search Committee will recommend a pastoral candidate to the Church. One week prior to the visit from the candidate, the announcement will be made in the Church newsletter and during the morning worship service.

On the Sunday designated for the candidate's visit, at the close of the morning worship service, the recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee will be received with the reasons for its recommendation. The vote will be by ballot and will be counted by the Committee on Committees. Affirmative ballots must constitute eighty percent of those cast for a call to be extended to the candidate.

## **2. Ministerial Staff**

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

Ministerial staff members (except for the pastor) will be recommended to the Church for service by the pastor and the Personnel Committee, and called by Church action. In the event that the position is new, the pastor will have a job description created and submitted to the Personnel Committee for approval. Upon the approval of the Personnel Committee, the Finance Committee will then review the feasibility of financing the position, whether new or existing, and make its recommendation to the Personnel Committee. Should the pastor and Personnel Committee choose to move forward with the new ministerial staff position, a special business meeting will be called for approval of the position in accordance with Article VI. D. Approval of the new position shall be by an affirmative vote of the majority of the voting members present.

A prospective staff member who comes in view of a call to fill the position (whether newly created or a vacant existing position) will be presented to the Church for election at a special business meeting called for that purpose in accordance with Article VI. D., at which time the election shall be by ballot. An affirmative vote of seventy-five percent of the voting members present shall be necessary for approval.

Each ministerial staff member shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the staff member's relinquishment or the Church's declaration. A staff member may relinquish the position by giving at least two weeks' notice at the time of resignation. The Church may declare the position to be vacant and the staff member's ministry relationship with this congregation terminated at a meeting called for that purpose. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present shall be necessary to declare the office vacant and the staff member's ministry relationship with this congregation thereby terminated. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the staff member, the Church will compensate the staff member with no less than one-twelfth of his or her total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered at the time of dismissal.

### **3. Church Clerk**

The Church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer, who shall serve until a successor has been elected. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the Church and recording minutes of the Church business meetings. The clerk must be present at all regular and called Church business meetings to record the results of all matters voted upon. In the absence of the clerk, the chair will appoint someone to fill this function.

### **4. Trustees**

Three Trustees shall be elected to act for the Church in legal matters and shall serve until successors are elected. They shall hold Church real estate 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 real estate. When the signatures of the Trustees are required, any two or more shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of real estate, or other legal documents related to Church approved matters.

## **B. Support Staff**

Support staff members shall be employed within the financial parameters established by the approved budget as the need of their services is determined.

The hiring, ongoing supervision, and termination of support staff shall be the responsibility of the pastor and the supervising ministerial staff member. All activity in these areas shall be carried out in accordance with personnel policies and procedures promulgated by the Personnel Committee.

## **C. Church Committees, Task Forces, and Ministry Teams**

### **1. Committees**

#### **a. Standing Committees**

All Standing Committees of the Church shall be composed of nine members who serve three-year terms. The terms shall be staggered so that one-third of the members will rotate off the committee each year and such members will be eligible for reappointment to the committee after one year. Each standing committee shall select its own chairperson each year.

Whenever standing committees feel that Church action is required on a particular issue, the committee may present the matter to the Church for vote. Prior to doing so, the committee may solicit the input of other Church committees, the Deacon Council, ministry teams, task forces, and Church staff.

The following committees are designated as Standing Committees and shall serve at the discretion and direction of the Church as needed in its ministry. The Church may add or eliminate Standing Committees in a manner designated by the Church.

#### **(1) Child Development Committee**

This committee shall meet monthly to assist the Child Development Center (CDC) Director in overseeing the operation of the CDC program, as well as to study and propose policies for the CDC program to the Church and will oversee these approved policies.

This committee and the supervising minister shall have the responsibility, with the approval of the Personnel Committee, to employ and discharge a director of the CDC. The CDC Director, in consultation with his or her supervising minister, will have the responsibility to employ and discharge CDC employees. Working with the supervising minister, this committee is to set the salaries and benefits of all CDC teachers and workers and to establish tuition and other charges.

The CDC director and the director's supervising minister shall be ex officio members of the committee. The CDC chairperson may appoint

CDC parents from different families who have been recommended by the CDC director as advisory members of the committee. This committee shall coordinate its work with all related Church committees.

**(2) Committee on Committees**

This committee shall nominate the people to serve on Church committees matching the gifts of the member with the ministry of the committee. These nominees shall be submitted to the Church for approval. This committee shall also recommend the creation of any new committees as the need arises, as well as filling vacancies as they occur by submitting the committees and the names to the Church for approval. The duties and scope of the work of each committee shall be adjusted by the Committee on Committees when necessary.

**(3) Evangelism and Missions Committee**

This committee shall promote a spirit of perennial evangelism and encourage personal witnessing and shall assist the pastor and the staff in preparing for all special spiritual emphases. In the area of missions, this committee shall stay current with the mission needs and bring them to the attention of the Church; provide guidance and counsel for the FBC mission work in San Angelo and around the world; prepare the Evangelism and Missions portion of the annual Church budget and present it to the Finance Committee and, for informational purposes, to the Deacon Council.

**(4) Finance Committee**

The role of the Finance Committee is to monitor the financial status of the Church. The committee shall meet monthly to review expenses and income. The committee is also responsible for keeping the membership informed of the financial standing of the Church, for considering non-budgeted items and jointly recommending them to the Church, and for managing other financial matters that arise. The committee shall make monthly financial reports to the Deacon Council and quarterly reports to the Church.

The Finance Committee is also responsible for preparing the annual Church budget, frequently functioning as the Budget Promotion Committee. The committee shall receive the budgets prepared by the Evangelism and Missions, Insurance, Personnel, and the Properties Committees, as well as the budgets prepared by the Church staff members. The committee shall then prepare a budget for the next fiscal year based on projected income and expenses. The Finance

Committee shall present the proposed budget to the Deacon Council no later than the October deacons' meeting and shall present it to the Church at a business meeting in November.

**(5) Insurance Committee**

This committee shall study the insurance needs of the Church facilities, furnishings, equipment, vehicles, and staff. This committee shall be aware of all insurance policies' expiration dates in order to evaluate and make coverage comparisons (bids should be obtained at least every three years) so the committee members can recommend to the Finance Committee the renewal, replacement, or cancellation of the insurance at the appropriate time.

The committee shall prepare the insurance budget for Church facilities, furnishings, equipment, and vehicles each year.

In conjunction with the Personnel Committee, this committee shall evaluate the insurance needs for the staff, jointly making recommendations to the Finance Committee. The Personnel Committee and Insurance Committee shall also prepare the staff insurance budget and present it to the Finance Committee each year.

**(6) Personnel Committee**

This committee shall assist in personnel administration, evaluation, job descriptions, and employee policies for all ministers and Church employees. The committee shall assist the ministerial staff in acquiring the names of qualified individuals for staff vacancies except for the pastor's position. The committee shall recommend to the membership that they call the persons to fill the vacancies.

**(7) Properties Committee**

The Properties Committee is to establish policies for the use of Church buses, vans, buildings, and equipment; to conduct regular inspections of buildings and grounds, subsequently making recommendations for repairs or replacements; and to be responsible for an annual inventory of furniture and equipment. The committee will collect and review annual inspection reports from professionals who inspect items such as, but not limited to, heating and cooling equipment, elevators, fire specifications, smoke detectors, lighting, and plumbing to determine needs. In case of emergency, this committee will strive to restore services as necessary.

The Properties Committee shall recommend the purchase of additional material, equipment, and property as needed and shall carry out the policies for the use of all Church properties, buildings, and equipment to stay within the ministries and purposes of First Baptist Church.

In the event that a special building committee is not active, the Properties Committee shall supervise any necessary construction and remodeling and will carry out the adoptions of the Church with regard to properties and buildings.

The Properties Committee is also responsible for preparing a properties budget, presenting it to the Finance Committee, and, for information purposes, presenting it to the Deacon Council.

**(8) Scholarship Committee**

The Scholarship Committee is responsible for overseeing the process of awarding scholarships to applicants who meet the criteria set by the committee. The committee will establish the qualifications for receiving scholarships, promote and solicit applications, and will encourage donations to the Church Scholarship Fund. (Further description of this committee's responsibilities are outlined in the *Church Policies and Procedures Handbook*.)

**(9) Spiritual Formation Advisory Committee**

This committee is to work with the ministerial staff to evaluate each area of the Church's ministry where spiritual formation takes place and recommend any necessary changes to better achieve the Church's purpose.

**b. Ad Hoc Committees**

**Building Committee**

This committee will study the current and future construction, renovation, and parking needs of the Church in coordination with facts gathered by Church committees and staff. The findings and recommendations of this committee will go to the Deacon Council and to the Church for final action. The detailed planning and construction of all renovation, parking lots, and new buildings approved by the Church will be monitored by this committee.

### **c. Foundations**

#### **First Baptist Church Foundation**

The purpose of the First Baptist Church Foundation is to provide a permanent fund, the income of which shall be used for the preservation and upkeep of the physical structures and facilities and other capital needs of First Baptist Church and its missions. The Foundation members shall consist of the vice chairperson of the Deacon Council of First Baptist Church, the three Trustees of First Baptist Church, the chairperson of the Finance Committee and four people qualified to serve, nominated by the Committee on Committees of First Baptist Church.

### **2. Task Forces and Ministry Teams**

The Church is also authorized to utilize Task Forces and Ministry Teams to aid in accomplishing the mission of the Church. Task Forces are authorized by the Church and have a limited function and duration. The number of members of a task force shall be determined at the time of its creation and will be based on the task and duration assigned to it. Ministry Teams are on-going groups that serve specific ministry needs and are formed under the supervision of a member of the ministerial staff and have a non-specific number of members. The minister shall enlist the team leaders of the teams for which he or she is responsible. Each fall the minister shall contact the team leader to see whether he or she would like to continue to serve the following year and to evaluate the status of the ministry team. The team leaders shall be voted on each year when the committees and other church officers are elected.

## **ARTICLE III. Deacons**

### **A. Mission Statement**

The Deacon Council, in fulfilling its servanthood role in First Baptist Church, serves to evaluate and advise the Church in matters presented to the council from the standing Church committees and in such matters that are related to Church polity that promote the harmony and fellowship of the Church.

### **B. Qualifications**

Those who meet the Biblical guidelines set forth in Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-13 and who have been members of First Baptist Church for one year at the time they are nominated are eligible to serve as deacons. Ordained ministers who meet the

guidelines are also eligible to serve, as are those who have been ordained as deacons by a Baptist Church of like faith.

### **C. Duties and Responsibilities**

Every deacon of First Baptist Church is expected to seek out and occupy a chosen place of service in the Church in addition to performing services as a deacon. All deacons shall support the work of the Lord, through the various ministries of the Church, with their time and finances, as they practice sacrificial Biblical stewardship. Deacons should attend all Deacon Council and business meetings of the First Baptist Church as a matter of example and service, in supplying their voices to these deliberations. Deacons shall attend worship services and perform assigned duties related to the conduct of the Sunday worship service, including, but not limited to, serving as Deacon of the Week as assigned and participating in the serving of the Lord's Supper. Each deacon is expected to commit to daily prayer for the pastor and the Church. All deacons shall adhere to the Deacons' Covenant.

### **D. Deacons' Covenant**

The First Baptist Church of San Angelo seeks to be a missional community that follows Jesus Christ and shares the message of the Bible as loving, caring servants. In the furtherance of its mission, First Baptist Church selects members in accordance with Biblical principles and examples to serve as deacons.

By accepting the call of the Church to be a deacon:

1. I will support the mission of First Baptist Church of San Angelo through my service, my giving, my attendance, and my prayers.
2. I will serve in a spirit of loving humility and as led by the Holy Spirit.
3. I recognize and accept the responsibility of a deacon to be a servant leader, and I know that the members of the Church look to deacons to take a leading role in the mission of the Church.
4. I will serve to the fullest extent of my abilities and pledge that I will, if at such time I am unable to faithfully fulfill the expectations of a deacon at the First Baptist Church of San Angelo, Texas, resign from the Deacon Council or decline to accept appointment to the Deacon Council.

### **E. Election and Nomination of Deacons**

The Deacon Council will consist of forty-five deacons elected by the Church membership. Deacons elected to the Deacon Council will serve on the council for a three-year term, a year in the term of service being from April 1 to March 31. The

number of deacons to be elected each year will be determined as needed to maintain the Deacon Council at forty-five members. If the pastor, in consultation with the Deacon Council, determines a need for additional deacons, they shall determine the number of additional deacons to be ordained. Should a vacancy occur on the Deacon Council, the Deacon Selection Committee would choose a replacement from the list of deacons nominated by the Church membership from the immediate past election. The Deacon Selection Committee will consist of the current Deacon Council chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and two additional deacons appointed by the current deacon chairperson and approved by the Deacon Council with the Church pastor serving as an ex-officio member.

Each Church member will be asked to nominate the number of people who meet the qualifications to be considered as prospective deacons, not to exceed the number as stated in the preceding paragraph.

The names of those nominated for ordination will be reviewed by the Deacon Selection Committee to determine if those nominated meet the qualifications as set forth under the deacon qualification requirements. The Deacon Selection Committee will also, if it has been determined that those nominated are qualified, meet with the nominees to inform them of their duties and responsibilities as a deacon if they agree to serve the Church in the role of a deacon. The qualified deacon nominee shall then be approved by the Deacon Council to be ordained. Deacon Council officers will be nominated by a committee of deacons appointed by the Deacon Council chairperson. The new officers will be elected during the March meeting of the council.

#### **ARTICLE IV. Church Program Organizations**

The Church shall maintain programs of Bible study, Church member training, Church leader training, new member orientation, mission education, action, and support, and music education, training, and service. All organizations related to the Church programs shall be under Church control: all officers being elected by the Church and reporting regularly to the Church, and all program activities subject to Church coordination and approval. The staff shall nominate organization officers and directors for Church election. The Church shall provide human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

#### **ARTICLE V. Church Ordinances**

##### **A. Baptism**

This Church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Baptism shall be by immersion in water. The ministerial staff, or whomever the pastor or Church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church or in any other manner designated by the Church. The pastor

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

## **B. The Lord's Supper**

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once each quarter of the year and at other appropriate times. All those present who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior may participate. The pastor and deacons, or whomever the pastor or Church may authorize, shall administer the Lord's Supper.

## **ARTICLE VI. Congregational Meetings**

### **A. Worship Services**

The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday and at other times as led by the Holy Spirit for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, and singing, shall be among the many ways of worship during these services.

### **B. Special Services**

Revival services and any other Church meetings for the advancement of the Church's objectives shall be held as recommended by the Church staff or Church organizations.

### **C. Regular Business Meetings**

For reporting purposes, church quarters end on February 28/29, May 31, August 31, and November 30. The Church shall hold a quarterly business meeting on the third Wednesday of April, July, October, and January. Quarterly business meeting dates may be rescheduled by the pastor, the deacons, or the Church to accommodate holidays or unusual circumstances. Notice of the rescheduled regular meeting shall appear in the Church newsletter and shall be announced during the worship services at least one week prior to the date of the meeting. All recommendations, reports, and new business to be presented at the quarterly business meeting other than the Quarterly Report must be printed in the Church newsletter at least one week prior to the meeting. Any new business not on the agenda will be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and possible action or may be submitted for publication in the Church newsletter as stipulated above; then the issue will be discussed and voted on at a business meeting called for that purpose.

### **D. Special Business Meetings**

The Church may call special business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. The notice of a special business meeting shall include the subject, the date, the time, and the place of the meeting, and the notice must be in the Church newsletter the Sunday prior to the meeting and must be announced during Wednesday

and Sunday worship services before the meeting. No business except that for which the meeting was called may be transacted.

**E. Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of those members who attend any regular or special business meeting.

**F. Moderator**

The pastor shall serve as moderator at all business meetings of the Church. In the pastor's absence, the pastor or Church may designate someone to preside.

**G. Rules of Procedure**

In order to preserve an orderly meeting, the moderator, if necessary, may refer to the most recently revised version of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

**ARTICLE VII. Church Finances**

**A. Budget**

The Finance Committee, in consultation with the Church staff and heads of budgeted Church organizations, shall prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all expenses.

It is understood that membership in this Church involves financial obligation to support the Church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Offering envelopes will be provided for members' use.

**B. Accounting Procedures**

All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the financial ministry assistant and be properly recorded on the books of the Church. (For details of Church money management, refer to *Church Policies and Procedures Handbook* in the Church office.)

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

The Trustees shall be authorized to select and designate such depository or depositories for the funds and securities of the Church as they shall deem proper, upon recommendation of the Finance Committee. All checks, notes, and contracts of the Church and all orders for deposit or withdrawal of securities from the designated depository or depositories shall be signed by the financial ministry assistant and one other staff member authorized by the Church.

### **C. Fiscal Year**

The Church fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end December 31.

### **ARTICLE VIII. Amendments**

Changes in the Bylaws may be made at any business meeting of the Church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing in the Church newsletter at least two weeks prior to the regular or special business meeting. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be adopted by receiving a majority vote of the Church members present and voting at the business meeting.

Adopted March 26, 2008.