

Bylaws

First Baptist Church, Athens, Texas

As Amended March 24, 2010

Preamble

These bylaws are to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, to govern this church body in an orderly manner, to uphold the liberties inherent in church membership, to maintain the autonomy of this church with respect to other churches of the same faith, and to carry out the expression of the founders of First Baptist Church, Athens, Texas.

Article 1: Name and Purpose

1. The name of this church is First Baptist Church of Athens, Texas, a corporation organized and operated exclusively for the religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.
2. The purpose of this church body is to bring the grace of Jesus Christ to the world through relevant worship, empowering people, and meeting human needs.

Article 2: Membership

1. First Baptist Church is a fellowship of followers of Jesus Christ and welcomes persons who accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and wish to become members of this congregation.
2. A person may be received for membership by any one of the following ways:
 - (a) By public profession of faith in Jesus Christ and subsequent baptism, or
 - (b) By letter or promise of letter from a church of like faith in Jesus Christ and believer's baptism, or
 - (c) By statement of faith in Jesus Christ and believer's baptism in another church, or
 - (d) By request for watchcare. Watchcare members do not hold church offices or vote on church business.
3. New members will be added to the church rolls by majority vote at a Quarterly Business Meeting.
4. Members may be removed from the church rolls in the following ways:
 - (a) Upon the death of the member; or
 - (b) Upon request of a church letter of recommendation for membership in another Baptist church; or
 - (c) Upon joining a church of another faith; or

- (d) Upon withdrawal of fellowship by the Church as provided in the scriptures; or
- (e) Upon request of the Church member.

Article 3: Deacons

1. Deacons are members of and set apart by the Church to serve alongside the Pastor and staff as spiritual leaders and servants of the Church, promoting all interests of the Church and holding up the scriptural standards set forth in the New Testament. The deacons will have a chairman, vice chairman, and secretary to serve one-year terms in accordance with deacon policy.
2. The function, selection process, qualifications, and status of deacons are defined in the Deacon Policy of the Church.

Article 4: Church Government

1. **Church Officers:**
 - (a) **Pastor:** The Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church. It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to administer, or cause to be administered, the ordinances of the Gospel, to act as moderator at Church business meetings when present, to supervise other church staff, and to perform the various duties incumbent to his office. The Pastor shall be elected by the Church and shall continue as Pastor until his service is terminated by death, resignation, or removal by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a business meeting.
 - (b) **Deacon Officers:** The deacon officers are officers of the Church as provided in Article 3 of these Bylaws. The deacon officers are the trustees of the church corporation. The Chairman of the Deacons will serve as moderator at Church business meetings in the absence of the Pastor and the Vice Chairman will serve as moderator in the absence of the Pastor and Chairman of the Deacons.
 - (c) **Leadership Team:** The FBC Leadership Team shall be comprised of approximately fifteen (15) church members representing major committees, functions, ministries, and age groups within the Church. Members of the Team are nominated by the Chairman of the Deacons, endorsed by the Leadership Team, and elected by the Church at regularly scheduled business meetings. The Team's primary function is to support the Pastor and staff in an advisory capacity, assist in leading the Church to achieve its purpose, identify and suggest solutions to problems within the Church, propose activities to enhance the spiritual health of the Church, and recommend the composition of special committees.
 - (d) **Clerk:** The Clerk shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of each business meeting of the Church, prepare reports requested by various denominational agencies, and maintain the membership

roll of the Church. The Clerk shall be nominated by the Chairman of the Deacons, endorsed by the Leadership Team, and elected by the Church for a one-year term. The Pastor may appoint an Assistant Clerk to fulfill the duties of the Clerk in the Clerk's absence or inability to serve.

- (e) **Treasurer:** The Treasurer and assistant treasurer(s) shall be nominated by the Chairman of the Deacons, endorsed by the Leadership Team, and elected by the church for a one-year term.

Article 5: Corporate Officers

1. **Corporate Officers:** In compliance with the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act, the Church shall have the following corporate officers:
 - (a) **President:** The offices of the President and the Chairman of Deacons shall be held by the same person. In addition to duties as Chairman of the Deacons, the President's only other authority in the capacity of President shall be the power to execute, in behalf of the church, instruments requiring execution by the Church when the execution thereof has been authorized and approved by the Church as provided in the Bylaws.
 - (b) **Vice President:** The offices of Vice President and Vice Chairman of the Deacons shall be held by the same person. In addition to duties as Vice Chairman of the Deacons, the Vice President's only other authority in the capacity of Vice President shall be the power to perform the duties of the President upon the death, absence, resignation, or inability of the President to perform the duties of the office.
 - (c) **Secretary/Treasurer:** The Secretary/Treasurer shall be the Secretary of the Deacons.
2. **Election of Officers:** All corporate officers shall be elected by the church for a term of one year. Term of office shall begin the first Sunday of each January. Each officer elected as is herein provided shall continue in office until a successor is elected and assumes the responsibilities of the office. A vacancy in any office may be filled by the Church at any regular or special business meeting.
3. **Financial Responsibility:** The corporate officers shall have no power to borrow money or to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any Church real property without prior approval of the Finance Committee and the Church. The signature of two (2) of the three corporate officers will be required to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of officers are required as stipulated in Article 8.4.
4. **Removal of Officers:** Any officer so elected by the Church may be removed by the same manner as elected at any time whenever it is deemed to be in the best interest of the Church. Any office shall automatically be considered vacant when the incumbent dies, resigns, or is no longer a member of the Church.

Article 6: Committees

1. The Church will establish standing and special committees to carry out its work:
 - (a) Standing committees are those committees that are elected by the Church annually and are established to perform specific on-going tasks. A Membership Involvement Committee will be nominated by the Chairman of the Deacons, endorsed by the Leadership Team, and elected by the Church. The Membership Involvement Committee recommends the composition of the standing committees for the Church election. All standing committees shall bring their reports and recommendations to the Church for action.
 - (b) Special committees are those committees elected to perform specific functions for a short term, e.g., search committees to fill staff vacancies, etc. These committees are nominated by the Chairman of Deacons, endorsed by the Leadership Team, and elected by the Church.

Article 7: Meetings

1. **Worship Services:** Public worship services and special worship services will be held at occasions deemed best for the advancement of the cause of Christ.
2. **Regular Business Meetings:** Regular business meetings of Church members shall be held the Wednesday after the third Sunday of January, April, July, and October. In event of a conflict, notification of a rescheduled meeting will be given, otherwise, notification to members is not required.
3. **Special Business Meetings:** The Church may be called into a special business meeting for the handling of its business and affairs. Either oral or written notice must be given in the weekly Church publication or in the regular Sunday morning worship service one week prior to the special business meeting. Only posted business shall be voted on. Other items may be addressed but not voted on.
4. **Quorum of Members:** The members present at any regular or special business meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Article 8: Finances and Assets

1. **Budget and Financial Expenditures:** Ministries and programs of the Church are funded by the stewardship of its members through tithes, offerings and special gifts. The Budget Committee develops the annual budget for the fiscal year and it is presented to the Church for approval. The budget process as overseen by the Budget Committee should entertain and reflect the needs of the individual ministries and programs of the Church and have a direction that reflects the mission of the Church. Committees are responsible for the allocation of funds for their ministry

and must update their budgets as necessary to reflect the particular needs of their ministry. The Finance Committee shall thereafter oversee the expenditures of the church funds against such budget, making modifications within the approved budget as may be reasonably necessary to meet unforeseen needs and expenses in accomplishing the Church program. The Finance Committee shall provide all information as may be necessary for the full understanding of the monthly financial affairs of the church.

2. **Accounting Procedures:** All funds received for any and all purposes of the Church shall pass through the hands of the Church financial office and be properly recorded on the books of the Church. A system of accounting procedures that will adequately provide and protect the control of all funds of the Church shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.
3. **Fiscal year:** The fiscal year of First Baptist Church, Athens, Texas, shall be a date recommended by the Budget and Finance Committees and approved by the Church.
4. **Conveyance and Other Instruments:** The Church may sell, convey, mortgage, encumber, or otherwise deal with or dispose of real or personal property valued in excess of \$5,000 and owned by the Church and may evidence such transactions by deed, bill of sale, mortgage, deed of trust, contract or other appropriate instrument signed by the Chairman of Deacons and Chairman of the Finance Committee when such action has been authorized by the Church in accordance with these Bylaws. Transactions of real or personal property, valued less than \$5,000, will be handled by the responsible committee(s) in accordance with the Finance Committee policies.

Article 9: Amendments

1. The Leadership Team will coordinate a review of the Church Bylaws to be sure the Bylaws accurately reflect the manner in which the Church is organized and functions.
2. These Bylaws may be amended at any business meeting, with two (2) weeks advance notice as specified in Article 7.3, and by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present and voting, in two consecutive business meetings with two weeks notice.

Article 10: Discontinuance

If the Church chooses to dissolve its Church body, it will first pay all liabilities or make provision for payment. Upon discontinuance, it will transfer all remaining assets to another church or organization, which qualifies as a charitable organization under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. The specific assignment of these assets will be determined by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present and voting, in two consecutive business meetings with two weeks notice.