

By-Laws of First Southern Baptist Church, Pueblo Colorado, DBA Aberdeen Baptist Church

(Approved January 15, 2012, modified December 16, 2012)

I. Membership

A. Qualifications

- i. The membership of this church consists of individuals who have made a public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, who have experienced believer's baptism by immersion, and have been received into the fellowship of this church by vote of a majority of the members present at any regular worship service. Any person may request membership in this church in any of the following three ways:
 1. By profession of faith and baptism
 2. By promise of letter from another Baptist church
 3. When no letter is obtainable, by statement of prior conversion experience and testimony of believer's baptism by immersion. If the individual was baptized outside the Baptist tradition, the pastor may deem it necessary for the individual to be baptized again.
- ii. If the approval of an individual is not unanimous, the objection should be voiced in the service in which the request for membership is presented. The objection will be referred to the pastor and deacons for investigation. A recommendation from the deacons will be presented to the church within thirty days of the date of the objection. A three-fourths majority of those present and voting is then required to approve the individual for membership.

B. Expectations and Rights

- i. Members are expected to be faithful to all the duties essential to the Christian life, to attend services of this church regularly if physically able, to give regularly for its support and its causes, and to share in its ministry
 1. Active resident members: members who reside within the church's ministry area and are actively participating in the church
 2. Inactive members: members who reside in the church's ministry area but who are not actively participating in the life of the church, or any person who has moved out the church's ministry area and has not joined another church. Inactive members who reside in the church's ministry area shall be contacted and encouraged to become re-involved in the body. If, however, they choose not to reestablish fellowship, they shall be notified of being designated as an inactive member. The process by which member are reclassified as active shall be outlined in the operations manual. Inactive members may not exercise any voting privileges in church decisions, and are ineligible for elected offices within the church
- ii. Any member who has completed membership orientation is eligible for consideration by the membership for elected offices in the church
- iii. Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church

C. Orientation - Every new member of this church is expected to participate in the church's member orientation

D. Termination of Membership - Membership may be terminated in the following ways:

- i. Death
- ii. Moving of membership to another Baptist Church
- iii. Removal upon written request
- iv. Removal upon proof of membership or active involvement in a church of another denomination
- v. Exclusion due to immoral or unchristian conduct

E. Discipline

- i. Should any major conflict arise among members, the offended member is to humbly submit to the instructions given by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-35
- ii. Should any case of gross breach of covenant or public scandal occur, the deacon body is responsible to address the offense, and if necessary, recommend church action be taken to deal with the offense
- iii. All proceedings will be expected to be conducted in a spirit of Christian kindness and patience, but if needed, the deacon body may recommend that the offender be removed from membership of the church. This action must be recommended during a regular business meeting of the church, and must be approved by a three-fourths majority of the members present

- iv. The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded for disciplinary reasons by request of the person. The church's decision must reflect upon the evidence of the person's repentance and continued action, and must be approved by a three-fourths majority of the members present.

II. Church Officers – All church officers must be members of this church. Church officers fall into one of the following three categories

A. Scriptural Officers: Pastor, Staff Ministers, and Deacons

- i. **Pastor:** The pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament church. He will lead the congregation, church staff, and Leadership Team in performing their tasks. He is the leader of worship, proclamation, education, and pastoral ministry

1. **Calling:** A pastor will be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs using the following timeline:

- a) A Pastor Search Team will be elected by the church. One week's official notice to the church is required before this vote
- b) The Pastor Search Team will be nominated by the church, set by majority vote of church members present
- c) The team will elect their chairman, and work together to seek out a suitable, God-called man to serve as pastor
- d) Only one candidate at a time may be presented to the church. The candidate must be in agreement with this church's Statement of Faith and polity. A minimum of one week's notice must be given before a called meeting to elect a new pastor. Election must be by ballot, with an affirmative vote of three-fourths majority of members present for approval of the candidate

2. **Termination:** The pastor may tender his resignation at any time he believes he should do so by giving the church at least two weeks' notice. In extreme circumstances, the church may end the pastor's employment under the following conditions:

- a) Every effort has been made privately, according to Matthew 18:15-35, to avoid this action before any public action is taken.
- b) The meeting to recommend termination may be called for by a joint three-fourths majority of the Deacon Body and three-fourths majority of the Leadership Team, or by written petition signed by not less than 51% of active church membership
- c) Public announcement of the meeting and its purpose must be made at least one week in advance, and serious effort must be made to inform every active member of the meeting and its purpose.
- d) The pastor will be informed by the deacon body of the prospect of such action and be given a chance to face his accusers
- e) The church moderator will preside over this meeting. In his absence, a moderator will be chosen by majority vote of the members present. This individual cannot be the pastor.
- f) The vote to terminate the pastor's employment will be by ballot, and termination must be approved by three-fourths majority of active members present
- g) The church will compensate the terminated pastor with no less than one-twelfth of his total annual salary package
- h) Termination will be effective immediately, and compensation will be rendered within thirty days of the effective date

- ii. **Staff Ministers** – Staff ministers are responsible for assisting the pastor in specified areas as he leads the church in functioning as a New Testament church

1. **Calling:** The staff minister is to be called and employed after the church determines there is a need for such position(s) by the following process
 - a) The pastor will prepare and present the staff position need and a written job description to the Leadership Team

- b) The Leadership Team will review, and if needed revise, the pastor's recommendation, then work with the Budget and Finance Committee to determine the compensation and expenses required to fill this position
 - c) Together, the Leadership Team and Budget and Finance Committee will make a joint recommendation to the church concerning the drafted position description and estimated compensation
 - d) Upon approval by the church, a search committee which must include the pastor will be selected for the purpose of searching for a suitable, God-called individual to fill the proposed position.
 - e) The committee will present their recommendation to the church. One week's notice will be given to the church of the vote, and a two-thirds majority of voting members must approve that a call be extended.
2. **Termination:** A member of the ministerial staff may tender his or her resignation to the church by giving at least two weeks' notice.
- a) If the pastor (in agreement with the Leadership Team) believes it to be necessary to request a ministerial staff member to present his or her resignation, this request is to be considered sufficient by the staff member. The resignation will be presented to the Leadership Team, who then will present it to the church. In this situation, compensation conditions will be the same as described for the pastor in section II.A.i.2.g&h.
 - b) In extreme cases, upon recommendation by the pastor and Leadership Team, the church may vote by a three-fourths majority of members present to terminate employment. Termination will be effective immediately and compensation conditions will be the same as described for the pastor in section II.A.i.2.g&h.

iii. Deacons

1. The New Testament teaches that deacons are to be servants of the church. Deacons must meet the qualifications for the office found in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3. They are to be spiritual leaders who exemplify leadership in the following areas:
 - a) Proclaiming the Gospel to believers and unbelievers
 - b) Caring for church members and the community of Pueblo
 - c) Leading the church to engage in fellowship, worship, witness, stewardship, education, ministry, and living out the Christian faith.
 - d) Assisting the Pastor in caring for the needs of church members
 - e) Serving as general Pulpit Supply in absence or inability of the Pastor.
 - f) During times when the church is pastor-less, the Deacons will arrange for temporary preaching supply, unless the church makes other provisions
2. Nomination process & term of service
 - a) The number of deacons will be determined by the ministry needs of the church
 - b) Candidates for deacon ministry must be members of the church for at least 12 months, and already be ordained or be eligible for ordination
 - c) In preparation for the following calendar year, members will be given the opportunity to nominate, in writing, men who are believed to be qualified and eligible for service
 - d) The pastor and current deacon body will appoint an internal screening committee to interview nominees and make a recommendation
 - e) When screening is completed, the church will elect by secret ballot the new individuals to serve. Unless a mid-year addition is deemed necessary by the deacon body, this process should be completed before December 15
 - f) Standard service period for individual deacons will be 3 years. Each year, the terms of 1/3 of the deacon body will expire, and new individuals will fill those positions.

- g) Deacons are expected to take one year sabbatical after a maximum three years' service. If an extended term is necessary, the church body must approve the term extension by majority vote at a regular business meeting.
- h) There is no obligation to activate an ordained man who becomes a member of this church after serving in another church as an active deacon.

B. General Officers: Moderator; Church Clerk; Trustees

- i. **Moderator** – The moderator is to be elected by the church annually. In the absence of the moderator, the pastor or chairman of deacons may preside. In the absence of these individuals, the church clerk will call the church to order and an acting moderator will be elected.
- ii. **Church Clerk** – This individual is expected to attend all church business meetings (or find a suitable individual to substitute) and will be responsible for keeping an organized record of all business action of the church. The clerk is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, as well as a record of baptisms. The clerk will issue letters of dismissal as voted by the church, preserve on file all communication and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary as indicated in these by-laws. The church secretary may be assigned to any and all of these tasks in place of the election of a clerk. All church records are church property, and must be kept on church grounds.
- iii. **Trustees** – Five trustees will be elected annually on a rotation basis by the church to serve for three years. Until their successors shall be elected, trustees will hold in trust the property of the church
 - 1. No person shall be elected to serve as Trustee for more than two consecutive terms. Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It is the responsibility of the Trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents where the signatures of Trustees are required. On all property transfers, at least two signatures of trustees are required. On all other legal documents one trustee's signature is required.
 - 2. Trustees hold the responsibility for upkeep or recommendations of upgrade of all church property, including but not limited to ministry facilities, grounds, and parsonage.

C. Leadership Team: Consisting of five to nine members, including Ministry Staff, Deacon Representative, and ministry leaders in the church. The Leadership Team is responsible for planning, implementing, and assessing ministry strategy of FSBC. Responsibilities are as follows:

- i. Meet at least monthly to plan and administer church program
- ii. Church Personnel and any recommendations made to the church regarding such decisions
- iii. Enlisting church members to serve in ministry roles to fulfill vision of the church. Each member will hold specific responsibilities to delegate to greater church family.
- iv. Periodically review and update policy and procedures, as well as make recommendations regarding Constitution and By-Laws. Any recommended changes must be presented to the church body in business session for approval
- v. Hold ministry staff accountable to fulfilling roles and vision of the church
- vi. All programs & events must be presented to, and if necessary, approved by the Leadership Team
- vii. Any discipline situations involving ministerial staff will be handled through this team. In the event that the situation involves the Senior Pastor, the Deacon Representative will act as team chairman in his absence.
- viii. Non-staff team members can be elected to up to three one year terms. After three consecutive years' service, a person is required to be off the team for one year. Pastor and ministerial staff members are voting members of the Leadership Team for the duration of their employment by the church.
- ix. If a staff member or any team member is under investigation for any reason, he or she is to be removed from the leadership team for the duration of the investigation.

III. Non-ministerial Church Personnel – These positions include, but are not limited to, Church Secretary/Ministry Assistant, Financial Secretary, Custodial Staff, Nursery Workers, and other needed staff members as authorized by the church.

A. Establishment of Non-ministerial positions

- i. When a need or opening is presented, the Pastor and Leadership Team will work together to create or modify the job description for the position
 - ii. The Leadership Team and Finance Committee will work together in the preparation recommendations for salary and benefits for positions. A joint recommendation will then be presented to the church for the recommended job description and compensation
 - iii. The Pastor and Leadership Team shall assign a ministerial staff person to be responsible as supervisor for the position
- B. Employment and Termination of Non-Ministerial Staff**
 - i. The Leadership Team holds the authority to employ individuals to fill the non-ministerial staff positions created by the church
 - ii. The Pastor and Leadership Team will work together in both needs of employment and termination of staff members.
 - iii. The pastor is expected to be the administrator of the church's entire ministry program, and in consultation with the Leadership Team, may request the resignation of any employee when in the best interest of the church. In extreme cases (i.e. moral issues, insubordination, fraud), the pastor holds the authority to request resignation, and if necessary, terminate the employment of the individual.
 - iv. In any and all cases, however the termination occurs, the resignation or termination does not need to be presented to the church for action since the Leadership Team has been given final authority by the church to act on its behalf in all matters regarding non-ministerial staff.

IV. Committees and Ministry Teams

- A. Membership** – Church membership is prerequisite to serve as an officer, committee member, or elected worker in any and all organizations of the church
- B. Standing Committees**
 - i. Leadership Team, Trustees, Finance Committee – Terms of service are lined out in coordinating sections of these by-laws
- C. Ministry Teams**
 - i. Team Leaders for specific ministry needs are to be appointed by the Leadership Team. Team Leaders must be active members of the church. These individuals are accountable to the Leadership Team to administer the needs of their particular ministry. Team Leaders have the authority to recruit qualified individuals to fulfill the team's job description.
 - ii. Ministry Teams may be formed by the Leadership Team at any point a ministry need presents itself. A primary goal of each team is to enlist individuals not already involved in other ministries to fulfill the vision of the church
- D. Job descriptions** for each team and committee will be established by the Leadership Team and presented for approval and revision by the church when necessary

- V. Christian Growth Ministries** - The Leadership Team will be responsible for administration of the education programs of the church. These programs include, but are not limited to, Small Group Bible Study (Sunday School or other weekly groups), Family Ministries, Missions, Men's and Women's Ministries, and Music Ministries.

VI. Church Meetings

- A. Worship Services** – The church shall hold services each Sunday for Worship and Bible Study.
- B. Special Services** – When necessary and appropriate, special services will be planned by the appropriate group, scheduled through the Leadership Team, and placed on the calendar
- C. Business Meetings**
 - i. Regular Business Meetings are to be held quarterly in the months of January, April, July, and October on the Wednesday evening that best fits on the church calendar. Appropriate notice will be provided when major decisions of the church are placed on the agenda

- ii. Special Business Meetings may be called when necessary. These meetings and their purpose will be announced a minimum of one week prior to the meeting. Only the announced topic will be discussed in these meetings
- D. Quorum
 - i. A quorum shall consist of 5% of active resident membership as recorded in the last annual church letter to the Southern Baptist Convention
 - ii. Refer to sections I.B.i.1&2 of these by-laws for qualifications of active resident members
- E. Parliamentary Procedure – Unless otherwise agreed upon, the latest publication of Robert's Rules of Order shall serve as a guide in all matters of procedure

VII. Church Finances

A. Policies:

- i. The church will depend on tithes and offerings for the financial support of ongoing ministries of the church (Genesis 14:17-20; Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 1 Corinthians 8&9; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
- ii. Every member is encouraged to practice this scriptural method of financial stewardship and support of the church.
- iii. We shall endeavor to be completely honest in all financial matters and prompt in discharging our obligations
- iv. Fiscal Year will begin January 1 and conclude December 31.
- B. Finance Committee - This committee will work with the Leadership Team to prepare and submit the annual budget for church approval. In this process, the committee will solicit projected needs from ministry leaders for consideration. The committee is responsible for addressing financial needs as they arise through the year.
- C. Funds – All funds shall be accounted for and recorded by the Finance Committee. These tasks may be delegated to an employed Financial Secretary.

VIII. Operations Manual

- A. **The Leadership Team** shall provide for development of a church operations manual to include church policies and procedures, organization flow-charts, and lines of responsibility in the administration of the church. This manual will be available through the church office and maintained by the church secretary. The manual will be reviewed at least annually and be revised as needed. Any church member or organization may request reviews to policies and procedures.
- B. Addition, revision, or deletion of church policies requires the following:
 - i. Recommendation by church officer or organization of affected areas
 - ii. Discussion and recommendation of the Leadership Team
 - iii. Approval of the church
- C. Procedural changes follow same lines, with approval by church only if deemed necessary by the Leadership Team

IX. Amendments

- A. Changes in this constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided such amendments have been presented in writing at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Copies of proposed amendments will be given to each member present.
- B. Amendments to the constitution will require a 2/3 majority of a quorum of 25% of active resident members
- C. Amendments to the bylaws will require a 2/3 majority of members present and voting