Bylaws of First Baptist Church

Final Committee Draft 4-8-08 ~ For Review

Article 1 – Church Government & Membership

Section 1 General

This is a sovereign and democratic Southern Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership has the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church and reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2 Candidacy

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who confess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord. Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church for membership at any regular church service in any of the following ways:

Profession of faith and for baptism.

Promise of letter from another church of like faith and practice.

By statement of prior conversion and baptism in a church of like faith and practice.

Should there be any dissent to a candidate, a two-thirds vote of those members present shall be required to accept the candidate as a member.

Action to accept a candidate for membership may be by motion or by asking for "All those in favor."

Section 3 New Member Orientation

New members of this church are expected to participate in the church's New Member Orientation.

Section 4 Membership Class

For the purpose of these bylaws, membership is divided into 3 categories as follows:

An Active member is one who has attended or contributed to the church within the past year.

An In-Active member is one who has not attended or contributed to the church within the past year.

A Watch-Care member is one who is prohibited by circumstances from attending services and therefore has no voting privileges until authorized by the church.

Section 5 Rights of Members

Every active member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in business meeting provided the member is present or a provision has been made for absentee balloting. Every active member is eligible for consideration as a candidate for elective office in the church. Every member may participate in the ordinances of the church.

Section 6 Duties of Members

Members are to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life including prayer, faithfully attending the services of this church, giving regularly for its support and sharing in its organized work. Offering envelopes shall be provided for member use.

Section 7 Termination of Membership

Membership may be terminated in the following ways:

Death of the member.

Transfer to another Baptist church. Any member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of transfer to any other Baptist church is entitled to receive it upon request.

Erasure upon membership in a church of another denomination.

Member request for termination. If a member requests to be released from their obligations to this church, such request may be granted.

Immoral, unchristian conduct or persistent breach of covenant vows.

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church the Pastor and deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. Termination of membership for immoral/unchristian conduct or persistent breach of covenant vows will be by recommendation of the deacons. The termination cannot take place at the same meeting when the recommendation for such action is made. A two-thirds vote of the members present is required to declare the person to no longer be a member. All such proceeding shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and tolerance. The church may restore to membership any person upon request by that person and by a vote of the church upon evidence of the person's repentance and reformation.

Article 2 – Church Staff

Section 1 Ministerial Staff

Ministerial Staff shall give evidence of a personal call of God before being called by church action.

The Pastor is responsible to the church for using his gifts/skills in proclamation and pastoral care in meeting the needs of persons in the church and community and providing administrative leadership.

Other Ministerial Staff shall be called and employed upon the recommendation of the Personnel Committee as the church determines the need for such offices.

The Music Minister is responsible to the pastor for developing, planning, conducting, scheduling, and evaluating the music ministry of the church. The Music Minister shall perform other duties as assigned by the Pastor.

The Youth/Education Minister is responsible to the pastor for developing, planning, conducting, scheduling, and evaluating church education and youth programs. If the church determines the need for separate positions of Youth Minister and Education Minister, at the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and approval of the church, this position may be separated. The Youth/Education Minister shall perform other duties as assigned by the Pastor.

The Media Minister is responsible to the pastor for overseeing the development, coordination and evaluation of the Media Ministry of the church. The Director of Media shall perform other duties as assigned by the Pastor.

Section 2 Ministerial Support Staff

The Ministerial Office Staff shall be employed as the Personnel Committee determines the need for such positions subject to church approval at the next business meeting. The Ministerial Office Staff work directly with the Pastor and Ministerial Staff.

Section 3 Other Support Staff

The Support Staff shall be employed as the Personnel Committee determines the need for such positions. Support Staff includes all employees other than the Ministerial Staff and Ministerial Support Staff. The Personnel Committee will report to the church any action taken concerning the hiring or termination of Support Staff.

Section 4 Resignation

At the time of resignation at least two weeks' notice shall be given to the church.

Section 5 Termination

Pastor

The church may declare the office of Pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least one week's public notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the deacons or by written petition signed by not less than one fourth of the resident church members. The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote and shall be someone other than the Pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of two thirds of the members present being necessary to declare the office of Pastor vacant. The termination shall be immediate.

Other Ministerial Staff

The church may vote to vacate a Ministerial or Ministerial Support Staff position upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least one week's public notice has been given. The vote to declare the staff position vacant shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of two thirds of the members present required to declare the position vacant. The termination shall be immediate.

Support Staff

A Support Staff position may be terminated after due evaluation by the Personnel Committee. The termination shall be immediate.

Termination Compensation

Except in instances of gross misconduct, the church will compensate with not less than one twelfth of the total annual compensation, and compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

Article 3 – Officers

Section 1 General

All church officers and program officers shall be members of First Baptist Church. Officers, excluding Moderator and Deacons, shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee.

Section 2 Deacons

Deacons are to be servants of the church. Their task is to serve with the Pastor and Staff in performing the pastoral ministry tasks of:

(1) Leading the church in the achievement of its mission.
(2) Proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
(3) Caring for the church's members and other persons in the community.
(4) Assisting the Pastor in administering the ordinances.

In counsel with the Pastor, deacons are to have oversight of the discipline of the church.

Deacons shall be ordained to the office. Ordination in another church of like faith and practice shall suffice for this church although there is no obligation to choose such a person as a deacon in First Baptist Church.

Deacon qualifications include but are not limited to the following:

(1) Born again believer in Jesus Christ;
(2) Does not drink, buy, sell or give away alcoholic beverages;
(3) Model of faithful devotion to one spouse, if married;
(4) One who is worthy of respect, sincere and honest;
(5) Faithful to the church by tithing;
(6) Both deacon and spouse shall be Southern Baptist and members of this church who participate in and support its work;
(7) Should demonstrate spiritual qualifications prior to selection; and
(8) Be at least 21 years of age.

The deacons shall meet prior to the regular monthly business meeting of the church.

Section 3 Moderator

The Moderator of the church shall be the presiding officer in all church business meetings. The Pastor is designated as the Moderator. In the Pastor's absence he may appoint a moderator or the Chairman of Deacons shall act as moderator

Section 4 Church Clerk

The Church Clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church including keeping a register of members with dates of admission, transfers, or death along with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of transfer voted on by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports and give required notice of all business meetings where notice is necessary. The Church Clerk shall also be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association.

The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary who will assist the elected Church Clerk. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office.

Section 5 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible to oversee the Financial Secretary in the administration of receiving, banking, accounting and disbursing all church monies in a way that will provide adequate controls and safeguards. The Treasurer's report and records shall be audited at least once every three years by the Finance committee and/or public accountant

Section 6 Trustees

The church shall elect three Trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase or rental of property or other legal documents related to church approved matters. Trustees should have knowledge and experience related to legal matters, property and insurance. Trustees shall be elected for a 3 year term with one-third rotating off each year. Trustees are eligible for re-election after one year's absence.

Section 7 Program Officers

The church Program Officers shall include but not be limited to the following:

Sunday School Director, Discipleship Training Director, WMU Director, Brotherhood Director.

Article 4 – Committees

Section 1 General

All church committee members shall be members of First Baptist Church. Members shall be recommended by the church Nominating Committee and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these bylaws. Prospective committee members shall have already agreed to serve before their names are presented to the church for election.

All committees shall follow a plan of rotation with 1/3 of the members rotating off the committee each year. Members shall not be eligible for re-election on the same committee until one year's absence off the committee. Members shall be limited when practical to serving on only one committee at a time except where there is a related responsibility.

There are two types of committees – Standing and Special.

A Standing committee is one that works throughout the year having an ongoing list of duties that require regular performance and reports. It meets at regular intervals and carries out responsibilities that have continuity.

A Special or Ad Hoc committee is one that has specific duties that shall terminate at a specific time. The Pastor is authorized to appoint members to a

Special committee except when the church specifically votes to elect the committee.

The following guidelines shall govern all church committees:

All committees must meet as often as needed or specified within these bylaws and report to the church any recommendations made. Failure of attendance by any member to three consecutive meetings without justifiable reason will be grounds for removal from the committee. All committees are authorized to select sub-committees for specific work of a temporary nature. The committee shall be responsible for all actions of the sub-committee. Unless otherwise specified within these bylaws, each committee shall elect their own chairperson. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

Additional Standing committees may be added by the amendment procedure prescribed within these bylaws.

Section 2 Committees

Building and Grounds

The Building and Grounds Committee shall determine space needs for church programs and provide, allocate and maintain facilities, including the parsonage, equipment, and furnishings as needed. This committee shall also determine and recommend the need for acquiring additional space and equipment for programs. Members should be knowledgeable concerning program needs and the maintenance of facilities and equipment.

The committee shall be composed of five members.

Nominating

The Nominating Committee shall be responsible to the church for staffing all church elected offices and committees and for discovering and maintaining an inventory of prospective workers. The Chairman shall consult with the Pastor and Staff on all nominees prior to presenting names to the church for election. Members should be knowledgeable concerning all programs of the church and their leadership needs and be acquainted with and have the respect of the church membership.

Program Directors shall bring a list to the committee and the committee shall present the names to the church for election.

The committee shall be composed of five members.

Personnel

The Personnel Committee shall be aware of the need for any change to the church staff. This committee is solely an advisory body and shall always be subject to the will of the church as exercised by that body in a business meeting.

The committee shall provide job application forms to any prospective employee other than the Pastor. The committee shall furnish any forms needed directly to the Pastor Search Committee. The prospective employee shall be provided a job description, size and budget of the church and names of local ministers and leaders.

The committee shall review all job descriptions, policies and employee performance annually during September of each year. If any employee wishes to

discuss a change in their job description prior to the annual review, the employee should contact a committee member at least three days in advance of the proposed meeting. The committee is open to meeting with any employee at any time.

The committee shall consist of three men and two women.

Pre-School

The Pre-School Committee shall establish, recommend and publicize pre-school policies and procedures for use in the pre-school departments. It shall work in cooperation with the Staff to enact and enforce written policies concerning the pre-school work and meeting areas of the church. The Sunday School Pre-School Division Director shall serve on the committee. This committee shall be composed of three members.

Reception and Hospitality

The committee shall represent the church as hosts and shall be responsible for receptions or other functions as deemed necessary. The committee shall consist of seven members.

Finance

This committee is responsible to the church for administrating the total financial program of the church including budget planning and budget administration. The committee is also responsible for the development of Christian Stewards through stewardship education in all areas of the church program. The committee shall meet monthly prior to the regularly scheduled business meeting.

Committee members should be loyal church stewards, acquainted with the total church program, and knowledgeable of financial matters related to the church program.

This committee shall be composed of seven members including the Church Treasurer, and one member representing the Personnel Committee, selected by the Personnel Committee.

Article 5 – Program Organizations

Section 1 General

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching, church member training, leader training, new member orientation, mission education, small groups and music education training and performance.

All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control. All officers will be elected by the church and report regularly to the church. All program activities are subject to church coordination and approval.

All Directors and those engaged in teaching the Bible shall be members of First Baptist Church and elected by the church. Any helper not a member of First Baptist Church must be approved by two of the following: Pastor, Minister of Education and Program Director.

The church shall provide the human, physical and financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

Section 2 Sunday School

The Sunday School shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching program. Sunday School's task shall be to teach Biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ, enlarge church membership, perform the function of the church within Sunday School, provide and interpret information about the work of the church and denomination.

The Sunday School will be organized by departments and/or classes as appropriate for all ages and shall be conducted under the direction of a Sunday School Director elected by the church.

Section 3 Discipleship Training

The Discipleship Training organization shall serve as the training unit of the church. Its tasks shall be to train church members to perform the functions of the church; train church leaders; orient new church members; teach Christian theology; Christian ethics, Christian history and church government. Discipleship Training shall be under the direction of a Discipleship Training Director elected by the church.

Section 4 Missions

The WMU shall be the mission education, action and support organization of the church for women and girls. The Brotherhood shall be the church's organization for mission education, action and support for men and boys. Both organizations shall teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through prayer and offerings and shall have such officers and organization as the programs require.

Section 5 Church Music

The Church Music organization shall be the music education, training and performance organization of the church. It shall teach music, train persons to lead, sing and play music in the church and community. The Church Music program, under the direction of the Minister of Music, shall have such officers and organization as the program requires.

Article 6 – Church Council

Section 1 Authorization

The formation and use of a planning and coordination team called the Church Council is authorized.

Section 2 General

The Church Council is a planning, coordinating and evaluating organization through which all church organizations including committees may coordinate their activities into one program of work. It is not an authoritative or administrative group.

The council will meet monthly or quarterly as may be desired or on call of the Pastor or council chairperson at any time deemed necessary. All matters agreed upon by the council not already approved by the church shall be referred to the church for approval.

Section 3 Composition

The Church Council shall be composed of Directors of all church program organizations, Chairman of Deacons, Sunday School & Discipleship Training Directors, WMU & Brotherhood Directors, Pastor and Ministerial Staff. Church officers and

committee chairperson's attendance will be required only when their areas of work are to be discussed. The Pastor shall serve as chairman.

Article 7 – Ordinances

Section 1 Baptism

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Him as Lord. Scriptural baptism is by immersion in water under the authority of a church of like faith and practice. The Pastor or whomever the church shall authorize shall administer baptism. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.

Section 2 The Lord's Supper

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper quarterly unless otherwise scheduled by the church. Participation in the Lord's Supper shall be limited to those who have been born again, scripturally baptized and of like faith and practice. The Pastor and deacons, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer the Lord's Supper.

Article 8 – Meetings

Section 1 Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening unless otherwise scheduled.

Section 2 Special Services

Revival services and any other special church meetings shall be placed on the church calendar.

Section 3 Business Meetings

The church shall hold regular business meetings monthly on the second Wednesday evening.

The church may conduct special business meetings. A one week notice must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, date, time and place of the meeting and must be given in such a manner that resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting.

Section 4 Quorum

A quorum consists of 5% of the active membership as determined by the records of the church on the first day of each year.

Section 5 Notice / Public Notice

Notice and/or Public Notice may be given from the pulpt, in the weekly bulletin, mass mailing or on the church website.

Section 6 Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

Article 9 – Finances

Section 1 Budget

The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all expenses. This proposed budget shall be printed and made available to the active members a minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled business meeting at which it is to be discussed. Copies of the proposed budget shall be available in the church office. The proposed budget shall be discussed and amended as needed and by majority vote be recommended for adoption by the church without discussion at a special business meeting the following Sunday morning. Should the proposed budget fail to be adopted it will be referred back to the committee.

Section 2 Accounting

All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the Church Treasurer and/or Financial Secretary and be properly recorded on the books of the church. Those who have responsibility that involves actual handling of funds shall be bonded with the church paying the bond. The Treasurer along with the Financial Secretary shall be the primary signers of all checks issued by the church. Additional co-signers are authorized by the church. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.

Section 3 Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall run concurrently with the calendar year.

Section 4 Remuneration for Service

Supply preachers, both church members and non church members, may be paid an amount as authorized in the Policy Manual for each service preached. A mileage rate as authorized by the IRS may be paid. Lodging may be paid for those requiring overnight accommodations.

All revival remuneration shall be by love offering unless otherwise decided by the Pastor, Treasurer and/or the Finance Committee.

Interim Pastor remuneration shall be set by church action.

Mileage and other expenses incurred during the performance of the Pastor Search Committee and Personnel Committee duties are authorized.

Section 5 Budgeted Expenditures

Expenditures for budgeted items/categories are authorized provided funds are available. Repairs and/or maintenance to the church facilities are authorized from the Building Fund with the approval of the Pastor, Building & Grounds Chairperson and Church Treasurer.

Section 6 Non Budget Expenditures

Requests for expenditures outside of the normal budget shall be referred to the Finance Committee for review before presentation to the church.

Section 7 Designated Offerings

Designated offerings should be used for the purpose for which they were given. Any designated funds that remain after the purpose for which they were given, may be expended at the discretion of the Finance Committee.

Should the church vote to use a designated account for another purpose, the designated account shall be paid back in a timely manner and a report made at each business meeting as to the status of the re-payment.

Section 8 Emergency Provision

The pastor, chairperson of the Building and Grounds committee, or trustee may approve immediate emergency repairs or maintenance to insure the safety of the building and/or occupants. All such expenditures shall be reported to the church at the next business meeting following the expenditure.

Section 9 Special Offerings

Special offerings other than mission offerings are discouraged during the months of April, September and December.

Section 10 Contribution Records

Individual member contribution records are private and only the Financial Secretary and Church Treasurer shall have access to those records.

Section 11 Fundraising

Fundraising activities may be allowed only after authorization by the church.

Section 12 Emergency Payroll Fund

An emergency payroll fund equal to one week's payroll is authorized for use in meeting payroll obligations when weekly receipts fall short.

Section 13 Budget Amendments

The Finance Committee shall be responsible for making any budget amendment recommendations to the church.

Article 10 – Policy Manual

Section 1 Authorization

A Policy Manual containing day to day policies and procedures not covered in these bylaws is authorized.

Section 2 General

Any policy or procedure within the Policy Manual that is in conflict with the bylaws is revoked.

Polices contained within the Policy Manual may cover but are not limited to the following: Additional job descriptions, Additional Committees, Wedding policies, Use of Media equipment, Use of church vehicles, Parking Lots, and Use of church facilities.

Section 3 Availability

A copy of the Policy Manual shall be kept in the church office and will be available for reading by any church member.

Section 4 Policy Manual Amendments

Amendments and/or additions/corrections to the Policy Manual shall be by church action at any business meeting.

Article 11 – Elections

Section 1 General Elections

Unless otherwise indicated in these bylaws or determined by church action at a regular business meeting, all church elections shall be by the show of hands or voice vote.

Section 2 Personnel Committee

The Nominating Committee shall submit to the church a list of names equal to three times the number of vacancies to be filled on the Personnel Committee at the regular business meeting in September. The congregation may then add names to the list. The list of names will be presented to the church on the last Sunday night in September following the evening service. Voting will be by secret ballot and election shall be by majority vote. Immediate family members cannot serve together on the Personnel Committee during the same year. No one may be elected to the Personnel Committee if they have a member of their immediate family on the church staff.

Section 3 Pastor Search Committee

Election will be held on a Sunday morning by secret ballot for the Pastor Search Committee. Ballots will be distributed with room for five names. The five receiving the most votes will be elected to the committee. If any of the five decline to serve then the next highest person shall be elected. Of the five elected, the one receiving the most votes shall be chairperson. The alternate committee member will be the one receiving the next highest number of votes, after the five have been elected.

Section 4 Calling a Pastor

Voting to call a pastor shall be by secret ballot with a three-fourths majority necessary for election. The election shall take place at a Sunday service determined by church action. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated at his or the church's request.

Section 5 Ministerial Staff

Voting to call ministerial staff shall be by secret ballot with a majority of votes necessary for election. The election shall take place at a Sunday service determined by church action. The Ministerial Staff member, thus elected shall serve until the relationship is terminated at his or the church’s request.

Article 12 – Employment Policies

Section 1 Holidays

Church Holidays shall be; (1) New Year's Day, (2) Memorial Day, (3) July 4th, (4) Labor Day, (5) Thanksgiving Day, (6) Christmas Eve, and (7) Christmas Day. When any of these days fall on a weekend the Friday before or the Monday afterwards may be taken.

Section 2 Vacation

One year of employment must be completed before vacation benefits begin. Vacations must be taken within one calendar year. Staff members and employees are not eligible to receive pay instead of vacation time except upon termination. Vacation time should be taken to minimize impact upon the work place.

Staff members and employees shall earn paid vacation time according to the policy manual.

Section 3 Sick Leave

Sick leave is defined as absence from work with pay resulting from an illness or disabling injury. Sick leave is not intended or to be construed as "vacation time."

Sick leave may be used for personal illness or incapacity, or for occasions which require the employee to be the primary caregiver for a member of the immediate family who is ill or incapacitated. Care of non-family members is considered leave without pay. Time spent away from work caring for healthy children is considered leave without pay. Elective physician and dental appointments should be made to minimize impact upon the work place.

Staff members and employees shall not be paid for unused sick leave.

Section 4 Health Reimbursement Accounts

The church established a Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) effective January 1, 2005 for the benefit of all employees (working at least 16 hours or more per week) and their dependents (spouse & minor children) under Section 105(b),(e) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Health reimbursement accounts shall be maintained for each employee from which covered expenses (as defined by Section 213 of the Internal Revenue Code and Revenue Ruling 2003-102) for the employee or their dependents shall be reimbursed. Church-funded reimbursements to an employee and/or their dependents shall not exceed $1,000 plus any unused reimbursements (from previous years) during the calendar year.

The plan shall be administered in a nondiscriminatory manner (as defined by Section 150(h) of the Internal Revenue Code) and shall remain in effect until modified or terminated by a later resolution.

The plan shall cover employees only. Former employees are not eligible for reimbursement for their unused reimbursement amount remaining at retirement or other termination of employment. Employees may not take "lump-sum" payments of their unused reimbursement amounts. Payment of funds shall be for substantiated medical expenses only.

Section 5 Preschool Workers

Preschool 1 workers, excluding "extended session" workers, shall be paid for working during Sunday School and the Sunday morning worship service.

Section 6 Immediate Family

The *immediate family* is defined as father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, grandfather, grandmother, grandson, granddaughter, or corresponding in-law relationships.

Article 13 – General Provisions

Section 1 Availability

Copies of the Constitution and By-Laws shall be kept by the Church Clerk at all business meetings and a copy shall be kept in the church office. A copy of each document shall be available to each church family upon request. All amendments shall be made available to church members upon request.

Section 2 Amendments

Amendments to the By-Laws shall be made at regular business meetings of this church, provided that all Amendments must be presented in writing at a regular business meeting one month prior to consideration and with sufficient copies for those present. A copy of the amendment detailing the proposed change and the date and time of consideration shall be made available to each active church family a minimum of two weeks before the scheduled vote. Amendments to the By-Laws shall be by majority vote of those present and qualified to vote.

Section 3 Repeal

With the adoption and/or revision of this document, previously adopted rules in conflict with these bylaws are revoked.