

**BYLAWS**  
**THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA, INC.**  
**751 GREEN STREET NW**  
**GAINESVILLE, GEORGIA**

**REVISION XI**  
**ADOPTED DATE 04/19/2023**  
**TO INCORPORATE**  
**AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS REVISION X**

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**ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1 – Qualifications**

The membership of First Baptist Church of Gainesville, Georgia shall consist of persons who

- Confess faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and commit themselves to faithful discipleship to Christ as Lord,
- Express agreement with the purposes and beliefs of the church as described in its Constitution, and
- Are received into membership by an affirmation of the church according to the procedures set forth in these Bylaws.

**Section 2 –Membership**

A. Persons may be received into membership who present themselves to the church consistent with the qualifications set forth in **Section 1** and who request membership in the church in any one of the following ways:

1. Upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord and request for baptism by immersion;
2. Upon transfer of membership by letter from another Baptist Church;
3. Upon statement of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord with previous membership in another Christian church.

B. Members share equally in the democratic government of the church and may act and vote in all transactions of the church. Members shall be entitled to full participation in the

programs and activities of the church and its organizations, as provided in these Bylaws, and to share in and receive the full benefits of the spiritual ministry of the church.

### **Section 3 – Reception of Members**

Persons who present themselves for membership in response to the invitation of the church shall be greeted by the pastor or someone designated by the pastor. The pastor or the pastor's designee shall present to the congregation for acceptance the names of such persons and the nature of their requests for membership. The congregation shall then be led by the pastor or the pastor's designee to make an appropriate expression of welcome to them as members of First Baptist Church.

### **Section 4 – Duties**

- A. Membership in the church is a sacred duty and involves full commitment to Jesus Christ and to the purposes of the church. Each member is expected to practice faithful discipleship as taught in the New Testament and to strive for the realization of the ideals set forth in **Article III** of the First Baptist Church Constitution.
- B. Members are expected to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life and to attend regularly the services of the church, to contribute regularly for its support and its causes, and to share in its organized work.
- C. Members who move to another community are expected as soon as possible to transfer their membership to a church of like faith and order in their new community where they may continue to exercise the duties of Christian discipleship.

### **Section 5 – Rights of Members**

- A. Only members may vote in all elections and on all questions submitted to the church.
- B. Only members may hold elective office in the church.
- C. Members may attend any deacon or committee meeting of the church, except any portion of the meeting for which the agenda includes personnel matters of a sensitive nature. Attendance at a meeting is for observation only. A person may not address the meeting without majority consent of the body.

## **Section 6 – Termination of Membership**

- A. Any member of the church who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to a designated church of like faith and order is entitled to receive it upon request, and such a letter shall be granted by the church.
- B. Consistent with the principle of voluntary membership, the church may grant the request of a member who wishes to be released from membership and shall give to the member an appropriate letter of dismissal.
- C. If a member of the church unites with another church, his or her membership in First Baptist Church shall be terminated automatically.
- D. Upon a member's death his or her name shall be removed from the church roll.
- E. The secretary on the church staff responsible for the membership records is granted the authority by the church to issue letters of dismissal and recommendation as provided in paragraphs A and B above, and a report regarding these letters of dismissal shall be made at each regular business conference.

## **ARTICLE II – MEETINGS**

### **Section 1 – Meetings for Worship, Evangelism, Bible Study, Training and Service**

- A. The church shall hold regular meetings open to all persons in the community for the purposes of worship, prayer, teaching, training, and fellowship on Sunday mornings. Other meetings of the church as a whole or by authorized groups within the church shall be set according to the needs of the congregation or the groups concerned, with the advice and consent of the appropriate minister. Regular Sunday church worship services may be canceled only with the approval of the pastor and the chairperson of the active deacon body.
- B. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly.
- C. The ordinance of Baptism shall be observed under the direction of the pastor as the need arises.

- D. Revival meetings may be held under the guidance of the pastor. Other occasional religious meetings may be held at such times as appointed by the pastor or as determined by the vote of the church.

## **Section 2 – Conferences for Conducting Church Business**

- A. A regular business conference shall be held as needed, at the time determined by the pastor and/or chairperson of the active deacon body, with a minimum of one meeting required each quarter. The pastor or the chairperson of the active deacon body, or their designee, shall serve as moderator of any such business conference. The chairman of the active deacon body shall serve as moderator for any business conference when matters concerning the office of pastor are considered.
- B. Official notice of any such business conference shall be conducted in the manner deemed to be most effective in communicating with the largest number of members by the required deadline. Notification methods may include printed notifications sent by mail and distributed during church services and meetings, and electronic notices sent by email and posted on church websites and social media.
- C. The pastor and/or the chairperson of the active deacon body may call from the pulpit a special business conference. The request and notice is to be read from the pulpit at all Sunday worship services on any given Sunday one week before the conference, and sent to the membership at least five days before the conference as described in B above, not including holidays, stating the purpose, time and location of the conference. The pastor shall call such a conference when requested to do so by the active deacon body, trustees, or a duly authorized committee. Such special meetings, however, shall be limited to matters of urgent importance.
- D. A special business conference shall be called by the pastor and/or the chairperson of the active deacon body upon receipt, from any fifty (50) members of a written request specifying the purpose of the conference. The request and notice shall be sent to the church membership, as described in B above, at least one week preceding the time of the special business conference.
- E. A special conference for the purpose of extending a call to a pastor shall be announced from the pulpit at all Sunday worship services at least one week prior to the conference, and the membership of the church shall be notified as describe in B above at least five (5) days prior to such a conference.
- F. A quorum shall consist of those members participating and voting at a stated conference, or one which has been properly called.

- G. The church shall recognize the common rules of procedure set forth in Robert's Rules of Order, latest revision, in all matters of parliamentary procedure governing the deliberations of the church.

## **ARTICLE III – GENERAL CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **Section 1 – General Provisions**

- A. Any person elected as a church committee chairperson, or the chief leader of a ministry team shall be a member of this church for at least one-year preceding election. Deacons and trustees shall be active members of this church for at least two years preceding the election.
- B. Unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, all officers of the church and its organizations will be elected to serve for a one-year period.
- C. Ministerial staff positions shall be established by the church as need is determined. Ministerial staff members shall be called by the church in conference upon the approval and recommendation of the pastor, a search committee, the personnel committee, and the active deacon body. Their duties, conditions of employment, and their resignation or termination of their services shall be determined by the active deacon body upon recommendation of the pastor and the personnel committee.
- D. It shall be the practice of First Baptist Church to avoid nepotism in the hiring of ministers. No person shall be employed or contracted with for a ministerial position if a member of his or her immediate family is currently on staff or employed by FBC as a minister. For the purposes of this section, “immediate family” includes: wife, husband, daughter, son, mother, father, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepparent and stepchild.
- E. Employees, other than ministerial staff, shall be employed by the church administrator under the supervision of the personnel committee.

### **Section 2 – Pastor**

- A. The pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. A pastor search committee shall be elected by the church in the manner set forth in **Article IV, Section 7.A** of these Bylaws. The committee shall be responsible to seek out and



recommend to the church a pastor. No one may be considered for the office of pastor except upon recommendation of the pastor search committee. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present and voting at a properly called special business conference shall be necessary to call a pastor. The pastor thus called shall serve for an indefinite period and until the relationship is terminated under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, except as provided in paragraph E of this section.

- B. The pastor shall have charge of the general welfare and oversight of the church. The pastor shall conduct the worship services, give leadership to the entire program, give attention to the spiritual growth and well-being of the membership and work in cooperation with the elected leadership of the church and its organizations.
- C. Recognizing that the pastor is the chief leader of the church and needs to be informed of all actions and activities of the church, the pastor or the pastor's designee shall be an ex officio member of all leadership groups, committees, and organizations of the church. If the pastor chooses not to make an appointment, the church administrator shall be the designee. The pastor's counsel and leadership shall be recognized in the work of all such groups. All staff members and employees shall be ultimately responsible to the pastor.
- D. The pastor shall represent the church in the meetings of the religious organizations with which the church maintains relationships as set forth in **Article IV, Section 2** of the First Baptist Church Constitution. The pastor's reasonable expenses to such meetings shall be paid by the church.
- E. In the event of the necessity to declare the office of pastor vacant, the following procedure shall be observed. The active deacon body, after careful efforts to make such action unnecessary and following the principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1 and 1 Timothy 5:19, shall call a special conference of the church for this purpose. An affirmative vote of a majority of those present and voting shall be necessary to declare a vacancy.
- F. In the event of a vacancy in the office of pastor, the active deacon body shall be responsible for securing guest preachers for the worship services and may recommend to the church the election of an interim pastor.

### **Section 3 – Deacons**

- A. Number and Term of Office

1. The active deacon body of the church shall consist of up to sixty (60) regular members, up to one-third of whom shall be elected annually to serve for three-year terms.
2. Persons chosen to fill regular terms on the active deacon body shall be elected by the church to assume office on January 1 of each year.
3. After serving a term of three years, no deacon shall be eligible for reelection until the lapse of one year. Any deacon, however, who is elected to fill less than two years of an unexpired term shall be eligible for reelection without the lapse of one year.

## B. Nomination of Deacons

1. All nominees for Deacon shall:
  - a. Be at least 25 years of age by the last day of the Deacon Election;
  - b. Have been a member of First Baptist Church for at least two years by the last day of the Deacon Election;
  - c. Have been regular in attendance and in support of the services of the church and commit to continue doing so during a term of Deacon service;
  - d. Have been faithful in the practice of financial stewardship while a member of FBC, and commit to continue doing so during a term of Deacon service;
  - e. Meet the Biblical principles for men and women serving as deacons, as set forth in Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Romans 16:1-2;
  - f. Be of good report among church members;
  - g. Have served in some type of Christian ministry or service, some of which must be through the FBC, and commit to active ministry or service during a term of deacon service;
  - h. Be committed to faithfully attend monthly Deacon meetings and fulfill Deacon responsibilities as assigned;
  - i. Above all, be an active participant as a church servant and spiritual leader, and a unifier in the life of the congregation in keeping with the Biblical deacons chosen as described in Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Romans 16:1-2.
2. Solicitation of prospective deacon nominees shall occur each year, during the month of August, by publishing the nomination process at least once in a manner consistent with the notification for church conferences, as described in **Article II, Section 2.B** above.
3. Certification of Deacon Nominees
  - a. During the month of August, each church member may nominate up to twenty (20) members to serve as deacons. Nomination forms will be provided by the

church, and must be submitted to the Deacon Election Committee by the publicized deadline at the end of August. The Deacon Election Committee is comprised of the current deacon officers and three other retiring members of the active deacon body as elected by the current deacon body, as described in **Article IV, Section 7, paragraph B**. The church administrator shall serve on the Deacon Election Committee as a non-voting ex officio member. These forms will include a listing of the names of presently active deacons who are ineligible for consideration during this election cycle. Members may not nominate First Baptist ministerial staff members or their spouses, or employees of the church, or ordained ministers active in their calling who may be members of the church.

- b. After nominations are completed, the Deacon Election Committee shall send a letter by mail, as well as by email to every nominee, listing the requirements of **Article III, Section 3, B.a-i** above, and inviting them to attend any one of several scheduled Deacon Nominee Orientation meetings during the month of September. The letter will state that attendance at one meeting is required for any nominee's name to be placed on the Deacon Election Ballot. Exceptions must be approved by the Deacon Election Committee.
- c. Each Deacon Nominee Orientation meeting shall be led by the current Deacon Chairperson or designee, as well as another Deacon Officer and one ministerial staff member. The meeting will review the church's requirements for deacon service and allow time for questions and discussion. At the meeting's conclusion, each nominee will be given a Deacon Candidate Response Form and asked to prayerfully consider his/her nomination, then return the completed Response Form personally to the church office if wishing their name to be placed on the Deacon Election Ballot. The Deacon Candidate Response Form will ask the nominee to confirm that he/she meets, and will continue meeting, the church's requirements for deacon service, that he/she gives the church financial secretary permission to confidentially confirm that he/she is a financial supporter of FBC, and that he/she gives the church office permission to publish a current photo and brief ministry bio to the church membership for election purposes. The deadline for the church office to receive Deacon Candidate Response Forms shall be the last day of September.
- d. The Deacon Election Committee shall review all Deacon Candidate Response Forms received by the deadline for completeness and accuracy. If any questions arise regarding a nominee's information, the Deacon Chair or Deacon Officer designee shall appoint two members of the Deacon Election Committee to review and seek to resolve any question(s) regarding a deacon nominee. This may require speaking with the deacon nominee and/or other individuals having information regarding the unresolved question(s). All information obtained from such a

review shall be kept strictly confidential and revealed only to the Deacon Election Committee for a final decision by majority vote.

- e. All Nominees who have attended a Deacon Orientation, completed, and returned a Deacon Candidate Response Form by the deadline and whose statements have been confirmed, will become Deacon candidates; their names will be placed on the Deacon Election Ballot during the second week of October. The church will publish all Deacon candidate photos and bios in the church's October and November print and internet media, so church members can recognize and know each Deacon candidate by face, name, and ministry.

### C. Election Procedures

1. A ballot containing the names of all Deacon candidates who have been pre-qualified by the Deacon Election Committee according to the procedure in **Article III, Section 3.B** above, shall be prepared for distribution and voting. Said ballot shall be available for voting no later than the third Sunday in October. Ballots will be declared valid provided they bear the signature of the voting member, or their electronic ballot is certified by the church administrator.
2. The ballot shall include the following statement: Anyone having information that could cause a Deacon candidate to be disqualified shall notify a Deacon officer or the church administrator.
3. Ballots may be cast through the second Sunday in November, by placing them in the ballot containers in the church foyers or by electronically submitting them on the church website.
4. All ballots to be counted must be submitted by the end of the last morning worship service on the second Sunday in November.
5. The Deacon Election Committee will tabulate the ballots and submit a list of names of the twenty individuals who received the most votes to the pastor and deacon chairperson. In the event of a tie, the tie will be resolved by a vote of the Deacon Election Committee.
6. The list of remaining Deacon candidates will be ranked by the Deacon Election Committee according to the number of votes received and maintained by the Deacon Election Committee chairperson for one year. Deacon candidates on this list who have received the highest number of votes in the annual deacon election will be selected to fill any vacancies that occur during the year.

7. The pastor will announce the list of newly elected deacons on the third Sunday in November.

#### D. Deacons as Servants of the Church

Consistent with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament, deacons shall consider themselves as servants of the church and shall serve in administering the will of the church. The following duties shall be considered primary:

1. They shall be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace.
2. They shall serve as a council of advice and consultation with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the work of the church and shall cooperate with him in the general oversight of the moral, spiritual, and temporal welfare of the church.
3. They shall cooperate with the pastor in the care of the membership, particularly the sick, distressed, and widowed. They shall seek to know the physical and spiritual needs of members and shall serve in ministering to those in need.
4. They shall administer the financial affairs of the church, subject to approval of their actions by the church. Structural changes, any borrowing of money or any changes affecting the salary of the pastor or other ministerial staff members shall be submitted to the church in conference, except as set forth in **Article IV, Section 7, A.4.**
5. In counsel with the pastor and by such methods as the Holy Spirit may direct consistent with the teaching of the New Testament, the deacons shall have oversight of the discipline of the church, as described in **Article VI, Section 2.**
6. In order to carry out the will of the church, the Deacons shall oversee and coordinate the commissions, committees, ministry teams, and other leadership groups. In the event of the failure of another leadership group or committee of the church to carry out an assigned responsibility, the Deacons shall be responsible to ensure that the will of the church is accomplished.
7. One or more members of the active deacon body shall serve on each church committee and ministry team.

#### E. Deacon Meetings and Officers

The active deacon body shall meet monthly at a time they shall determine and shall elect a chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary. Terms of service shall be from January 1 through December 31 of the following year.

*1. Election of Officers*

- a. The Deacon Election Committee (see Article IV, Section 7, B) shall present, at the final meeting of the calendar year, a slate of nominees for the offices of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary, from among the membership of the active deacon body for the upcoming year, with each nominee having previously agreed to serve if elected. The Chairperson will open the floor for additional nominations. When the nominations are closed, officers will be elected by majority vote.
- b. The active deacon body shall adopt procedures, from time to time, that allow the newly elected deacons for the coming term, whether or not ordained, to vote in place of those deacons who will no longer be active in the term for which deacon officers are being chosen.

*2. Deacon Officers as Officers of the Corporate Body*

The deacon officers shall also serve as the corporate officers of the corporate body of the church incorporated under the name and style, "The First Baptist Church of Gainesville, Georgia, Inc." In this capacity, deacon officers shall be authorized to sign contracts, upon proper approval by the church, that do not involve title to property. These Bylaws shall also serve as the Bylaws of such corporation.

*3. Chairperson*

- a. The Chairperson shall preside over regular and called meetings of the active deacon body and shall prepare and distribute a written agenda for such meetings, as appropriate.
- b. The Chairperson shall serve as moderator for the business meetings of the church.
- c. The Chairperson shall serve as ex officio member of the Committee on Committees, the Financial Stewardship Committee, the Personnel Committee, and the Strategic Implementation Committee.

*4. Vice Chairperson*

- a. The Vice Chairperson shall preside over regular and called meetings of the active deacon body in the absence of the Chairperson.
- b. The Vice Chairperson shall serve as Chair of the Committee on Committees and its subcommittee, the Oversight Committee.
- c. The Vice Chairperson shall serve as ex officio member of the Strategic Implementation Planning Committee.
- d. The Vice Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson by coordinating the service activities of the active deacon body, as appropriate, including Deacons of the Week.

#### 5. *Secretary*

- a. The Secretary shall assist the Chairperson in communicating with the active deacon body, prepare and distribute written, contemporary minutes and attendance records of the regular and called meetings of the active deacon body, and submit approved copies of the minutes to the church administrator for the official record.
- b. The Secretary shall monitor the assignment of active deacons to committees and ministry teams, to ensure balance of service and that all deacons have an opportunity to serve.
- c. The Secretary shall serve as ex officio member of the Committee on Committees.

#### F. Life Deacons

In years past, First Baptist Church has recognized select individuals as Life Deacons. These persons have served at least twenty-four years as a deacon in a Baptist church, and at least twelve of those years at The First Baptist Church of Gainesville. They must be at least 65 years of age, and their life and service merits the highest honor the church can give a deacon. The church will honor those Life Deacons accordingly.



#### **Section 4 – Trustees**

- A. The church shall have three (3) trustees, one of whom shall be elected each year for a three-year term. Trustees shall be nominated and elected at the same time and in the same manner as deacons are nominated and elected.
- B. After serving a term of three years no trustee shall be eligible for reelection until the lapse of at least one year. Any trustee, however, who is elected to fill less than two years of an unexpired term shall be eligible for reelection without the lapse of one year.
- C. The trustees in their representative capacity shall be the legal holding entity of the real property of the church. They shall be charged with administering the will of the church in all legal matters, but they shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action. Trustees shall serve as ex officio members of the Legal Committee.

#### **Section 5 – Clerk**

- A. The clerk and assistant clerk shall be nominated by the Committee on Committees and elected by the church. The clerk and assistant clerk may serve consecutive, uninterrupted terms.
- B. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of all the actions of the church in conference.

#### **Section 6 – Treasurer**

- A. The treasurer and assistant treasurer shall be nominated by the Committee on Committees and elected by the church. The treasurer and assistant treasurer may serve consecutive, uninterrupted terms.
- B. The treasurer and assistant treasurer shall serve on the Financial Stewardship Committee and shall carry out the duties of the office with the assistance of the church financial administrator employed by the church. The church administrator or church financial

administrator, and the treasurer or assistant treasurer, shall sign and countersign all checks.

- C. The treasurer shall serve as ex officio member of the Committee on Committees and the Personnel Committee.

## **ARTICLE IV – COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1 – General Provisions**

- A. First Baptist Church accomplishes its work through committees and ministry teams. Committees and ministry teams allow church members to be involved in the life of First Baptist Church as their time and resources allow. The church shall establish such committees and ministry teams as it deems necessary to fulfill its stated purpose.
- B. Committees and ministry teams differentiated
  - 1. Basic Function:
    - a. **Standing committees** generally function as part of the church governance requiring greater accountability to the deacon body and church (i.e., recording meeting minutes, providing periodic updates, and making recommendations to the deacon body, etc.). Decision-making and accountability generally lies with the active deacon body or the church.
    - b. **Advisory committees** serve to provide input and feedback to the accountable staff member or as organizing teams for department activities. Generally, decision-making and accountability lie with a staff member. The number and function of advisory committees can and should be adjusted as the vision and work of the church evolve and, therefore, are not named in these Bylaws, but rather in the Church Operations Manual.
    - c. **Ad hoc committees** are formed by the deacon body as needed for a special purpose and for a limited time.
    - d. **Ministry teams** are generally service oriented working groups with limited budgets and minimal reporting requirements.

2. Membership:
  - a. Standing and Advisory committees have a finite number of church members who are nominated by the Committee on Committees (CoC) and approved by the church.
  - b. Ministry team participants may participate on multiple ministry teams and may join a team(s) based on their giftedness and commitment to serve. Ministry teams encourage others to come alongside in service.
3. Terms of Service:
  - a. Standing and Advisory committee members have fixed terms of service, normally 3 years.
  - b. Ministry team members may serve indefinitely.
4. Required Tenure:
  - a. Standing and Advisory committee membership requires church membership at First Baptist Church for at least the previous 12 months.
  - b. Ministry teams may include persons who are not members of First Baptist Church.

## **Section 2 – Committee and Ministry Team Composition**

- A. Each committee will have one staff liaison and one deacon liaison. All committee members, except where otherwise designated in these Bylaws shall be nominated by the Committee on Committees (CoC) during the month of October, or when practical thereafter to fill vacancies. Committee members nominated during the normal cycle shall be approved by the active deacon body and then ratified by the church at the next church business conference, which normally occurs in November. Committee members nominated to fill vacancies thereafter need only to be approved by the CoC.
- B. Unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws, one-third of the membership of each committee shall be appointed annually, necessitating one-third of each committee to rotate off the committee each year. In addition to the prescribed members in **Article IV, Sections 5 and 7**, a committee will have six (6) appointed members. Newly appointed committee members shall begin their three-year terms of service on January 1 following their

appointment. When a new committee is formed, committee members will be appointed for one-, two-, and three-year terms, as applicable to the composition of the committee.

- C. Committee chairpersons shall be nominated by the CoC during the nominating process in October. They shall be persons who have served on the respective committees for at least one year preceding their nomination by CoC or are otherwise qualified to lead the committee and may be nominated by exception.
- D. Ministry teams shall establish their own team leadership and membership. The CoC will assign each active ministry team a deacon liaison. The church administrator shall designate a staff liaison.

### **Section 3 – Oversight and Accountability**

- A. The active deacon body shall be accountable for oversight and coordination of each committee, ministry team, and other leadership groups to carry out the will of the church. This work shall be the responsibility of the **Oversight Committee**, which is comprised of the vice chairperson of the active deacon body and the two members of the Committee on Committees who were elected at large from the floor, without prior nomination, in the November meeting of the deacon body. The Oversight Committee shall be responsible for:
  - 1. Overseeing and coordinating all committees, ministry teams and other leadership groups;
  - 2. Coordinating with the chairperson of the active deacon body to ensure the deacons are informed on the status and actions of each standing committee;
  - 3. Submitting initially, and reviewing annually, a standard operating procedures (SOP) document, to be incorporated into the Church Operations Manual, and ensuring SOPs are updated as needed;
  - 4. Reviewing annually each ministry team's purpose and procedures to ensure coordination with related committee work and alignment with the will of the church;
  - 5. Within the SOPs, identifying what actions may be taken by a committee or ministry team on its own, what actions require deacon approval, and what actions require approval by the church in conference. SOPs and their proposed amendments shall be submitted first to the CoC for approval, and then to the active deacon body for approval, and filed in the Church Operations Manual, which is maintained by the

church administrator. Upon approval by the active deacon body, procedures shall be used until officially amended.

- B. Each standing committee (see **Section 5 below**) shall meet as early as possible during the first quarter of the calendar year, and thereafter as needed to function optimally.
- C. All standing committees shall keep written, contemporary minutes of their meetings. Copies should be filed electronically within five (5) days of a meeting and preserved as official church records by the church administrator in a place to be noted in the SOPs. Copies should also be filed with the Oversight Committee.

#### **Section 4 – Roles and Responsibilities**

- A. The staff liaison acts as a conduit between the committee and the ministerial staff ensuring that staff is informed of relevant committee input, recommendations, or actions. Staff members who serve as the liaison for a standing committee will be non-voting members of that committee.
- B. Ex officio members are members of a standing committee because of their role on the ministerial staff or as a lay leader in the church. Ministerial staff serving as ex officio will be non-voting members of standing committees. Ex officio lay leaders are voting members of standing committees.
- C. The committee chairperson is responsible for providing leadership that enables and encourages the committee to achieve its stated purpose. The chairperson is responsible for scheduling and facilitating meetings, including preparing an agenda that is aligned to the committee's stated purpose. All standing committee chairpersons should ensure that meeting minutes are recorded in writing and submitted for the records in a timely manner.
- D. The deacon liaison serves as a conduit between their assigned committee or ministry team and the active deacon body.
  - 1. He/she is responsible for working with the committee chairperson or ministry team leader to ensure that an initial planning meeting takes place at the beginning of the year and that the group is functioning as it should.
  - 2. The deacon liaison shall inform the Committee on Committees (CoC) about any vacancies that occur on their assigned committee so replacements can be nominated.

3. The deacon liaison is also responsible for informing the CoC of any change in leadership of a ministry team.
4. The deacon liaison is a participating and voting member of the assigned committee.

## **Section 5 – Standing Committees**

### **A. Committee on Committees (CoC)**

Except for committee positions otherwise prescribed in these bylaws, this committee is responsible for nominating persons to serve on all standing and advisory committees, and for nominating a chairperson for each committee. The CoC is encouraged to consult with the current committee chairperson regarding future appointments to that committee. Upon approval by the deacon body, the recommendations shall be carried to the church for ratification.

1. This committee shall also nominate the church clerk, assistant clerk, treasurer, and assistant treasurer.
2. This committee shall also review the function of each committee and ministry team annually and shall recommend to the church any changes or additions to the committees and ministry teams.
3. The membership of the CoC (see Article IV, Section 3.A) is comprised of:
  - a. the chairperson of the active deacon body;
  - b. the vice chairperson of the active deacon body;
  - c. the church treasurer;
  - d. one delegate at large to be elected from the floor at conference, without prior nomination; and,
  - e. two active deacons to be elected at large from the floor at the November deacons meeting, without prior nomination.
4. The vice chairperson of the active deacon body shall serve as chairperson of the CoC.
5. The **Oversight Committee**, named and described in **Article IV, Section 3.A**, is a subcommittee of the CoC.

### **B. Constitution and Bylaws Committee**

This committee is responsible for reviewing annually the church Constitution and Bylaws and for recommending to the church any changes needed to update these documents.

### **C. Financial Stewardship Committee**

This committee shall be responsible for oversight of all financial matters of the church, including, but not limited to, annual budget planning, monitoring spending and expenses, and developing and updating policies for fundraising and capital expenditures. The chairperson of deacons, the treasurer and assistant treasurer shall serve on this committee. The church administrator shall serve on this committee as an ex officio member.

#### **D. Legal Committee**

This committee shall advise on all legal matters involving the church such as, but not limited to, reviewing and negotiating contracts, liability risk assessments, and providing updates on changes in statutes and rules and regulations affecting religious organizations. Membership shall consist of three (3) members nominated by the CoC, with at least one of these being an attorney licensed to practice law in the state of Georgia. Any attorneys serving on this committee are not serving as legal counsel. Members will serve three-year terms, with one member rotating off/on each year. The trustees shall serve on this committee. The church administrator will serve on this committee as an ex officio member.

#### **E. Strategic Implementation Committee**

This committee guides the church in establishing, promoting, and fulfilling its goals for the future. The chairperson and vice chairperson of the active deacon body shall serve as ex officio members of this committee.

#### **F. Missions Committee**

This committee will work with the staff designee to help plan and coordinate all the missions activities of the church. This committee shall also work with the staff designee to administer the **Ministry of Caring**. The committee will consist of nine (9) members nominated by the CoC, three of whom shall serve as a subcommittee for the Ministry of Caring as part of their committee responsibility.

#### **G. Personnel Committee**

In accordance with personnel policy, as amended from time to time, this committee shall provide oversight for the pastor and church administrator in matters of personnel administration, including required consultation between the hiring manager and this committee prior to the employment of ministerial staff and administrative personnel. In accordance with **Article III, Section 1** of these Bylaws, this committee shall also assist the pastor in making recommendations to the active deacon body regarding hiring and compensation packages of ministerial staff. This committee shall require senior staff to provide each church employee an annual written performance evaluation, shall assist in developing and updating personnel policies and procedures, and ensure compliance in all personnel actions of the church. Membership of this committee shall consist of the pastor, church administrator, chairperson of the active deacon body, church treasurer, and three members appointed by the CoC for three-year terms, with one to rotate on/off each year.

#### **H. Property and Facilities Committee**

This committee shall advise on the stewardship and maintenance of church property and facilities. The church administrator will be an ex officio member of this committee.

## **Section 6 – Advisory Committees and Ministry Teams**

Unlike Standing Committees, which are described in these Bylaws above, Advisory Committees and Ministry Teams are not listed by name and description in the Bylaws. Because these groups are more likely to change as the needs of the church change, they will instead be listed and described in the Church Operations Manual. This listing will be actively maintained by the **Oversight Committee** of the CoC.

## **Section 7 – Special Committees**

### **A. Pastor Search Committee**

1. Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of pastor, the church shall elect a Pastor Search Committee composed of persons well acquainted with the work and needs of the church, and who represent the various organizations and groups in the church.
2. The committee shall be elected in the following manner: Within 30 days following the announcement of vacancy in the office of pastor, the Committee on Committees shall nominate to the church for election the person to serve as chairperson of the Pastor Search Committee. After election, the chairperson shall serve with the Committee on Committees to nominate to the church for election the other members to serve on the Pastor Search Committee. The nomination and election of committee members should follow as soon as possible, and in any case, within 45 days following the election of the chairperson.
3. The committee shall seek prayerfully to find the person whom God would have to serve as pastor of the church and shall submit its recommendation to the church. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one candidate at a time.
4. After agreeing upon a nominee for the office of pastor, the Pastor Search Committee, in consultation with the chairperson of the active deacon body and the chairperson of the Financial Stewardship Committee, shall also determine with the prospective pastor agreement concerning salary, housing, vacation, allowances and other matters of mutual importance. This agreement shall be reported to the active deacon body and shall be read at the time the nomination is placed before the church, and shall be approved or rejected with the nomination.



5. In all aspects of its work, the committee shall welcome recommendations and suggestions from the membership of the church.
6. The pastor shall be called in accordance with **Article III, Section 2, A.** of these Bylaws.

#### **B. Deacon Election Committee**

This committee, comprised of the current deacon officers and three other retiring members of the active deacon body, as elected by the current deacon body, is responsible for preparing ballots for the nomination and election of deacons by the church membership, and for tabulating votes for deacon nominees. The committee chairperson shall maintain all election records for a period of one year. Also, in accordance with **Article III, Section 3.E.1** of these bylaws, the Deacon Election Committee shall present, at the final meeting of the calendar year, a slate of nominees for offices of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary, from among the membership of the active deacon body for the upcoming year, for election by the deacon body. The chairperson of the active deacon body shall appoint the chairperson of the Deacon Election Committee. The church administrator shall serve as a non-voting ex officio member.

## **ARTICLE V – GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Section 1 – Procedure for Licensing and Ordination**

- A. The church may grant a license to preach to any person who gives evidence of being called of God to preach the gospel.
- B. The church may ordain a person as a minister of the gospel who gives satisfactory evidence of being called to the ministry and of the scriptural qualifications for ordination. The church shall for this purpose call an Ordaining Council composed of the Deacon Body and any other ordained persons who are members of this church (FBC Gainesville), who shall examine the qualifications of the candidate and bring recommendations to the church concerning ordination. The church in business conference shall hear any recommendations for ordination, and if so agreed, confer ordination in an announced church worship service.

## Section 2 – Discipline

- A. If personal differences should arise between members, the aggrieved member shall, in the spirit of Christ, seek reconciliation in the manner suggested in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.
- B. Should any case of a gross breach of conduct or of public scandal occur, the active deacon body shall endeavor to resolve the offense and if such effort fails, shall report the case to the church. Resolution can result in termination of membership.
- C. Consistent with the procedure set forth in **Article III, Section 3, paragraph D, subparagraph 5**, all proceedings dealing with discipline shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.
- D. In the case of grave difficulty, the church shall be ready, if requested, to ask the advice of an acceptable council from neighboring churches.

## Section 3 – Financial Policies

- A. All monies received by and for the church shall be deposited in a bank or banks approved by the active deacon body upon recommendation of the Financial Stewardship Committee.
- B. Deposits shall be made in the name of First Baptist Church and shall be distributed according to the annual budget adopted by the church, or as designated by individual donors as provided in paragraph D below.
- C. As need may arise the church may establish a building fund account or other such accounts in which funds shall be kept separate from the regular account of the church. Records of such funds shall be kept separately, and no check may be issued from the account except with the approval of the church and for the purpose for which the fund was established.
- D. All restricted receipts from any source shall be deposited and disbursed for the cause designated. Such receipts shall be used for no other purpose except with the permission of the person making the designation, except as otherwise allowed by law. Restricted gifts, other than those for denominational or church-related causes, shall be approved by a committee composed of the chairperson of the active deacon body, the chairperson of the Financial Stewardship Committee, and the chairperson of the Property and Facilities Committee prior to the acceptance of the gift. The church shall reserve the right to refuse the acceptance of a restricted gift.

- E. The Financial Stewardship Committee shall establish such procedures for receipts, expenditures, budget control and reporting which they may deem necessary to safeguard the assets, meet the obligations, and report the financial condition of the church. Reports to the church shall include an annual Audit.
- F. Special offerings may be sought by the church upon approval of the active deacon body. This requirement does not preclude, however, the privilege of individuals to make special offerings at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

## **ARTICLE VI – CHURCH OPERATIONS MANUAL**

The active deacon body, in conjunction with the Committee on Committees and the Oversight Committee, as provided in **Article IV, Section 3, paragraph A**, shall develop church policies and procedures and organizational charts depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the church, and include these policies and procedures in the Church Operations Manual. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available for use there by any member of the church. As provided in **Article IV, Section 3, paragraph A**, this manual shall be reviewed at least annually, with such changes being approved as may be necessary. Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual.

Policies or procedures may be added, revised or deleted by:

1. Recommendation of the church officer whose area of responsibility and authority is related to the policies or procedures in question;
2. Approval by the active deacon body; and,
3. Approval of the church if the active deacon body deems it necessary.

## **ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a business conference of the church. The proposed amendment(s) shall be laid before the church in writing at a business conference not less than one month before the time of the proposed action. In addition, a copy of the proposed amendment(s) shall be published in the church website or newsletter, with printed copies available in the church office, or read from the pulpit on the Sunday after the date the proposed amendment(s) is laid before the church in writing.

## **ARTICLE VIII – REPEAL**

Any Bylaws, Rules of Order and rules and regulations heretofore adopted by the church are hereby superseded and repealed.