

**RULES OF CHURCH ORDER**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

**GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

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ARTICLE I

SECTION A - RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

Each person uniting with this congregation should understand such action as involving commitment to the congregation's covenant. This commitment entails serious intention to grow in the grace and knowledge of God, to be a direct participant in the public worship, service, and financial life of the church, and to do these things in such a manner as to strengthen the unity and usefulness of Christ's church.

1. Presentation for Membership  
Individuals may present themselves for membership during services of public worship or in conference with an ordained member of the Ministerial Staff in the following ways:
  - a. By public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and asking to be baptized by immersion. Accommodations may be made at the discretion of an ordained Ministerial Staff Member for persons with medical conditions that would prohibit baptism by immersion.
  - b. By promise of letter transferred from another Baptist church.
  - c. By statement of previous profession of faith and baptism in another Christian church and now requesting baptism by immersion in this church.
  - d. By affirmation of a previous profession of faith and a baptism that symbolized identification with the Christian Faith and the church as the body of Christ.
  - e. By requesting to be under the "Watchcare" of this church, while maintaining membership within another church.
2. Acceptance of New Members:  
Membership shall be accepted by a majority vote or by the acclamation of members present at any regular church worship service or congregational meeting.

SECTION B - RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

1. Members shall have the right to vote in church matters, as hereinafter provided, and to serve in any elected or appointed position with the church or as an elected representative of the church to other groups or associations with which the church may affiliate.
2. Persons under the "Watchcare" program of the church may neither vote in church matters, nor serve in the following capacities: deacons; voting member of any church committee or organization; or, elective representative of the church to other groups or associations with which the church may affiliate.

3. Members may present any matter of church business at a regularly scheduled conference. Action on such matters will not be taken up until the next subsequent stated church conference after due notice, as hereinafter provided, has been given to the church. The only exception shall be the calling of a special conference of the church by the Diaconate after due notice to the church.

## SECTION C - TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Transfer of membership to another church will be granted to any member by sending a letter of transfer to the church in question.
2. A person's membership shall be terminated upon his or her written request.
3. A letter of commendation and dismissal will be granted upon request to any member who desires to withdraw from membership in this church.
4. Such transfers and dismissals shall be reported to the church at the next church conference.
5. Upon recommendation of the Diaconate and approved at a stated or called conference of the church, the church shall have the authority to terminate a person's membership.

## ARTICLE II

### SECTION A - THE STAFF

1. The Senior Minister
  - a. The Senior Minister shall be an ordained Baptist minister and, having been elected to the office of Senior Minister, shall become a member of the church.
  - b. The Senior Minister shall provide primary leadership to the church as it strives to achieve its vision of mission and ministry. He/she shall develop and maintain an organization that moves the church effectively toward meeting its objectives. He/she shall serve as moderator of church conferences and, when possible, be an ex-officio member of all committees elected by the church. He/she shall be a role model as a Christian human being and sustainer of church culture. The Senior Minister shall provide visionary leadership for the long-range planning process and serve in whatever ways he/she and the church mutually agree to be in the best interest of God's Kingdom.
  - c. The Senior Minister may be removed from his/her office on recommendation from the Personnel Committee, approval of the Diaconate and by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a Sunday morning service duly constituted as a conference of the church, after due notice of the purpose of such a conference has been given to the congregation and the Senior Minister.
  - d. The Senior Minister may resign from the church, following notice to the Personnel Committee of his/her intention to relinquish the position of Senior Minister.

- e. Following a vacancy in or a notice to resign the position of Senior Minister, the Diaconate Officers and the Personnel Committee shall meet to recommend to the Diaconate and the church transition plans during the vacancy of the Senior Minister position. Such recommendations may include appointment of an internal interim minister and/or assignment of Senior Minister responsibilities to one or more members of Ministerial staff.
  - f. When a vacancy has been announced in the office of Senior Minister, a Senior Minister Search Committee shall be named.
    - 1) The committee and its chair shall be nominated by the Officers of the Diaconate and recommended to the Diaconate. The committee and its chair shall be composed of seven members elected by the church to be a group that reflects the life of the church. The Responsibilities of the Search Committee include coordinating efforts within the congregation to identify qualities and capabilities for a Senior Minister along with the identification of congregational goals and objectives that may assist in the Senior Minister Search process. The members of the Senior Minister Search Committee shall serve until a Senior Minister is called or until relieved of their duties by the church.
    - 2) Within the guidelines established by the Personnel Committee as approved by the Diaconate, the compensation and benefits of the Senior Minister shall be those agreed upon by the Senior Minister candidate and the Search Committee.
    - 3) The Senior Minister Search Committee may recommend the name of a candidate for Senior Minister only with the consent of at least five of its seven members, and shall offer for consideration only one name at a time. The committee shall present the name of a candidate for Senior Minister to the Diaconate and with their recommendation to the church.
    - 4) A called church conference shall be convened to vote on the joint recommendation of the Senior Minister Search Committee and the Diaconate, after due notice to the congregation has been given. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present and voting shall constitute a call to the candidate to serve for as long as he/she and the church mutually agree that his/her service as Senior Minister is in accord with the purpose of God and in the best interest of the church. If the church does not call the person recommended by the Search Committee, the committee shall be dissolved and a new committee constituted.
2. Ministerial Staff
- a. Other ministers involved in all phases of the church's ministry may be employed as needed to serve for an indefinite period. Such ministers may be hired by the church upon the recommendation of the Senior Minister, any search committee that may have been appointed, and the Personnel Committee
  - b. Ministerial Staff shall be supervised by the Senior Minister, or the designee of the Senior Minister, who shall oversee their work. Ministerial Staff shall be in close communication with church committees having responsibility for their

- particular areas of the church's ministry and shall serve as staff liaisons of those committees.
- c. Duties, compensations, schedules, and vacations of Ministerial Staff shall be those agreed upon by them, the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee, and as generally outlined in the job description provided by the Personnel Committee.
  - d. Ministerial Staff members may be terminated upon the approval of the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee.
3. Program Staff
- a. Program Staff Members may be employed by the church upon recommendation of the Senior Minister, any search committee that may have been appointed, and the approval of the Personnel Committee.
  - b. Program Staff shall be in close communication with church committees having responsibility for particular areas of the church ministry and shall be staff liaisons of those committees where applicable.
  - c. Duties, supervisor, compensation, schedule and vacations of Program Staff shall be those agreed upon by the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee and as outlined in the job description provided by the Personnel Committee.
  - d. Program Staff may be terminated upon the approval of the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee.
4. Support Staff
- a. Support staff may be employed by the church upon recommendation of a member of the Senior Minister, any search committee that may have been appointed, and the approval of the Personnel Committee.
  - b. Duties, supervision, compensation, schedule and vacations of Support Staff shall be those agreed upon by the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee and as outlined in the job description provided by the Personnel Committee.
  - c. Support Staff may be terminated upon the approval of the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee.
5. First Baptist Church Kindergarten (FBCK) and Infant-Toddler (ITP) Staff
- a. The Directors of the FBCK and the ITP are under the supervision of the Senior Minister or the Senior Minister's designee.
  - b. The Directors may be terminated upon the approval of the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee.
  - c. Duties, supervision, compensation, schedule and vacations of the Directors shall be those agreed upon by the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee and as outlined in the job description provided by the Personnel Committee.
  - d. All other FBCK and ITP Staff report to the directors of their respective program and are under the governance of the personnel policies of their respective programs.

## SECTION B - LAY OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

1. All elected lay officers and committees, except as herein otherwise provided, shall begin their terms of office on January 1st.
2. The Diaconate
  - a. Qualifications
 

Deacons shall be elected from members of the church as hereinafter provided in view of the example set by Jesus in John 13:1-15 and the description by Paul in Romans 12:1-18. Deacons shall be servant-leaders who support the church and its mission statement with their time, talents and resources in the worship of God and in service to others.
  - b. Election and term of service
    - 1) Within the first quarter of the calendar year, or as soon thereafter as feasible, church members will be invited to submit nominations of individuals to serve on a Deacon Nominating Committee. From the nominations received, the Deacon Chair, in consultation with the Deacon Chair-elect, Senior Minister, and the incoming Deacon Nominating Chair shall appoint eight additional Deacon Nominating Committee members to serve with the incoming Chair. The members of the Deacon Nominating Committee shall be announced to the church and shall be published in the church's weekly newsletter
    - 2) The Deacon Chair, in consultation with the Deacon Chair-elect, Senior Minister, and the current Deacon Nominating Chair, shall appoint a Chair-elect for the Deacon Nominating Committee from those appointed. The Deacon Nominating Committee members shall be ineligible for nomination to the Diaconate. Unless serving as a Chair or Chair-elect, a Deacon Nominating Committee member shall serve for one year and, upon completion of the term, shall then be ineligible for service on this committee again for a period of two years. No two members of the same household may serve on the Deacon Nominating Committee.
    - 3) The Deacon Nominating Committee shall invite all church members to suggest names to the committee for consideration as possible nominees to the Diaconate. After adequate time for study and receiving the consent of each nominee, it shall present for election by the church in morning worship on a Sunday a list of names equal to the number of vacancies to be filled on the Diaconate. On the Sunday of the election in morning worship, any member may place in nomination the names of members not included among the nominees of the Deacon Nominating Committee.
    - 4) Sixteen deacons shall be elected annually on a Sunday in morning worship, except when resignations or deaths have reduced the total number of deacons to fewer than forty-eight, in which case a sufficient number shall be elected at the annual election of deacons to restore the number to forty-eight. The deacons shall determine which of those elected shall serve the unexpired term or terms by having them draw lots, omitting from the drawing any deacons having been elected to their first

term. No two members of the same household may serve on the Diaconate at the same time.

- 5) Deacons shall serve for a term of three years each, except those assigned to fill an unexpired term. After serving the terms for which they are elected, all shall be ineligible for re-election until the expiration of two years, except those chosen by the deacons to fill unexpired terms of one or two years. Any of the latter will be eligible for immediate re-election.
- 6) Those elected to the Diaconate for the first time shall be ordained. The ordination of those previously ordained by this or another Baptist church shall be honored.
- 7) Special recognition as a Senior Deacon shall be extended to those who have been elected as deacon for five or more times, of which at least four times were by this church. Having been so recognized or having previously been honored by the title of Senior Deacon shall not preclude these persons from consideration by the Deacon Nominating Committee.

c. Duties

The role of the deacon is to be a servant-leader. Both individually and collectively, deacons offer advice and counsel regarding church matters brought forward by church committees, any church member, the staff, or the community. The Diaconate is also charged with fulfilling official responsibilities as set forth elsewhere in the Rules of Church Order.

The deacons do not act as a board of directors, or in the place of the church, but as a matter of practical necessity they facilitate the work of the church, referring all matters of major concern to the church with their recommendations. The Diaconate may act on behalf of the church in emergencies providing the action of the Diaconate shall be ratified at the next church conference. The Chair has the authority to appoint task forces and ad hoc committees to further the business of the church and the Diaconate.

d. Meetings

Unless otherwise determined by the Diaconate, the regular meetings of the Diaconate shall be on the first Monday evening of each month. At other times the Chair or the Senior Minister may, after due notice, call a special meeting. A majority of the membership of the Diaconate must be present for business to be conducted.

e. Organization

The officers of the Diaconate shall consist of a Chair, a Chair-elect, a Secretary, and a Secretary-elect. The nomination of these officers shall be made at the November meeting of the Diaconate. The election of these officers shall be held at the first regular Monday evening meeting in December. The Committee on Committees shall submit a slate for these offices—one name for each position. At the November meeting, additional nominations may be made from the floor. If there is more than one nominee for any office, voting will be by written secret ballot for that office. Otherwise, voting may be done by voice or show of hands.

3. Church Clerk
  - a. The Church Clerk shall be elected annually at a stated church conference. A nomination by the Committee on Committees will be made at that time, and other nominations may be made from the floor. A favorable vote by two-thirds of the church members present and voting shall be necessary for election.
  - b. It shall be this person's duty to keep accurate, written records of all business conferences, to report these to the church when requested, and to see that permanent records are safely stored at the church.
4. Church Historian
  - a. The Church Historian shall be elected annually at a stated church conference. A nomination by the Committee on Committees will be made at that time, and other nominations may be made from the floor. A favorable vote by two-thirds of the church members present and voting shall be necessary for election.
  - b. This person shall assist the church in making and keeping accurate, comprehensive records of its current life and work; in gathering and safeguarding all historical records of the church; in helping the church understand and learn from its own history; and in helping church members know and appreciate their larger heritage as Baptists.

## ARTICLE III

### SECTION A - COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

1. Church committees shall be of three general types; standing committees, distinctive purpose committees, and organizations.
2. Standing committees are the committees that perform continuing functions in the life of the church.
3. Distinctive purpose committees are set up to perform temporary or ongoing services of special interest and need to the church.
4. Organizations are set up to perform functions in the life of the church that are the responsibilities of neither standing nor distinctive purpose committees.
5. Each committee and organization is responsible for developing and maintaining a policy manual or procedures as needed. These policies should be reviewed periodically to reflect committee practice. When considering policy revisions, the committee may invite the previous three chairs of the committee to be involved in discussions on the policy revisions.

### SECTION B - COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

1. The Committee on Committees and Chair shall be appointed by the Officers of the Diaconate from the current Diaconate. A group reflecting the life of the church and consisting of at least seven members will serve one year and meet regularly throughout the church year.



2. The duties shall be:
  - a. to annually update and identify the scope and responsibilities of each Standing Committee, including, but not limited to, the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, the Property Committee and the Stewardship Committee and to update and identify the scope and responsibilities of the Distinctive Purpose Committees and Organizations;
  - b. to recommend for election by the church at a stated church conference the members of the standing committees of the church, distinctive purpose committees, and organizations of the church as are hereinafter provided;
  - c. to fill vacancies that occur during the year on all committees and organizations for which it is responsible for nominating members; and
  - d. to recommend to the Diaconate the officers for the coming year.

## SECTION C - STANDING COMMITTEES

1. General Provisions
  - a. Standing committees shall be such as the church, upon recommendation of the Committee on Committees and the Diaconate shall deem advisable.
  - b. Members of standing committees shall be elected for three years, their terms arranged so that one-third shall be replaced each year, the Committee on Committees designating each year the committee Chair.
  - c. After serving three years on any standing committee, no person will be eligible to serve again on the same committee until the expiration of one year.
  - d. Insofar as possible, no person should serve on more than one standing committee at a time.
  - e. Members of a standing committee shall be elected by the church at a stated conference upon recommendation by the Committee on Committees, and shall serve until their terms have expired or their successors have been elected.
  - f. Standing committees shall be limited in the expenditure of church funds to the amount designated in the church budget for their work. Any excess of this amount shall require approval of the Finance Committee.
  - g. All standing committees shall be composed of seven or more members.
  - h. The spouses of church employees will not be eligible to serve on the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, the Property Committee or the Stewardship Committee. Spouses of employees may be recommended for service on other Standing Committees, Distinctive Purpose Committees, and Organizations where the Committee on Committees has determined there would be no conflict of interest from such service.
  - i. No two members of the same household may serve on the same standing committee at the same time except the following: Activities, Membership, Receptions, and Senior Adults.
  - j. The officers of the Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Property Committee and Stewardship Committee shall consist of a Chair and Chair-elect. The Chair-elect shall follow the Chair of these committees.

2. For its area of responsibility, each committee shall formulate and submit recommendations for the Mission and Ministry Plan for review and approval by the Finance Committee, Diaconate, and the church at large.
3. Other standing committees as deemed needed by the Committee on Committees and the Diaconate may be nominated by the Committee on Committees and recommended to the Diaconate and for election by the church.

## SECTION D - DISTINCTIVE PURPOSE COMMITTEES

1. General Provisions
  - a. Distinctive purpose committees shall be such as the Diaconate shall deem advisable.
  - b. Distinctive purpose committees shall be limited in the expenditure of church funds to the amount designated in the church Mission and Ministry Plan for their work. Any excess of this amount shall require approval of the Finance Committee.
  - c. The size of each committee shall be determined by the Committee on Committees in consultation with the Chair of that committee.

## SECTION E - ORGANIZATIONS

1. General Provisions
  - a. Organizations shall be such as the Diaconate shall deem advisable.
  - b. Organizations shall be limited in the expenditure of church funds to the amount designated in the church Mission and Ministry Plan for their work. Any excess of this amount shall require approval of the Finance Committee.
  - c. The size of each organization shall be determined by the Committee on Committees in consultation with the Chair of that committee, unless otherwise stated.

## ARTICLE IV

### SECTION A - STATED CHURCH CONFERENCES

1. Unless otherwise determined by the Diaconate—with two weeks' notice to the church in the church's weekly newsletter—stated church conferences will be held as needed to consider the business of the church.
2. Yearly reports will be made, and, unless otherwise designated above, lay officers and committee leadership of the church shall be elected and the Membership Report approved.
3. Fifty church members shall constitute a quorum for stated conferences. To make actions official, a majority vote of those present and voting shall constitute a decision, unless other majority fractions are prescribed in the Rules of Church Order.

## SECTION B - CALLED CONFERENCES

1. The church may be convened into a called conference by the Diaconate after due notice has been given in at least one issue of the church's weekly newsletter preceding the date of the proposed conference.
2. The church shall be convened into a called conference pursuant to Article II, Section A.1.e. Senior Minister Search Committee.
3. At such called conferences, only matters pertaining to the subject of the called conference may be considered.
4. Fifty church members shall constitute a quorum for called conferences. A majority vote of those present and voting shall constitute a decision, unless other majority fractions are prescribed in the Rules of Church Order.

## SECTION C - CALLED CONFERENCES FOR REAL PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

1. A conference of the church to sell, lease or otherwise convey the real property constituting the church campus situated at Cleveland Street and Faris Road shall be called by the Diaconate. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present and voting at such conference shall constitute approval of such action. Due notice of such conference and its purpose must be given to the church as provided in Article IV, Section B - Called Conferences .
2. A conference to acquire, sell, lease or otherwise convey any real property of the church other than the church campus property shall be called by the Diaconate. A majority vote of those present and voting at such conference shall constitute approval of such action. Due notice of such conference and its purpose must be given to the church as provided in Article IV, Section B - Called Conferences .
3. A conference is not required for gifts and conveyances of other real property to the church which may be received and subsequently conveyed in accordance with the policies of the Finance Committee.

## SECTION D – PROCEDURES AND PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

1. The Senior Minister shall serve as Moderator of all conferences. In his absence, one of the other ministers or the Chair of the Diaconate shall serve.
2. The latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be used as the official order of procedure for all church conferences.

## ARTICLE V

### AMENDMENTS AND REVIEWS

1. Amendments  
These rules of order and procedures may be amended by a two-thirds vote of members present at any stated conference of the church, provided:

- a. that written notice of the proposed amendment shall have been given at the previously stated conference;
  - b. that the proposed amendment shall both be announced in the church's weekly newsletter and be made available to church members no less than a week prior to the conference at which the proposed amendments are presented for first reading; and
  - c. that a report on proposed amendments shall have been given to the Diaconate for review before the first reading.
2. Reviews
- The Rules of Church Order shall be reviewed at least every five years.