

Constitution and Bylaws of the First Baptist Church of Elk Grove, California

Whereas, God's Holy Word and His creation teaches us that God established order for the conduct of our personal lives and for the conduct of the Church. We therefore memorialize these Bylaws and Constitution as the means to present order within the local church body. Jesus Christ is the sole head of this church body. Therefore, it is His Holy Word where we look for instruction, guidance and principle in the construction of this Constitution.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

In continuity with our immediate Baptist forefathers and the larger fellowship of Christians throughout history, we hereby reaffirm the following Articles of Faith of the First Baptist Church of Elk Grove:

1. We believe the Bible is God's Word given by divine inspiration, the record of God's revelation of Himself to humanity. (II Timothy 3:16). It is trustworthy, sufficient, without error--the supreme authority and guide for all doctrine and conduct (I Peter 1:23-25; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17). It is the truth by which God brings people into a saving relationship with Himself and leads them to Christian maturity (John 20:31; I John 5:9-12; Matthew 4:4; I Peter 2:2).

2. We believe in the one living and true God, perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy and love (I Timothy 1:17; Psalm 86:15; Deuteronomy 32:3-4). He exists eternally in three coequal persons who act together in creation, providence and redemption (Genesis 1:26; I Peter 1:2; Hebrews 1:1-3).

a. The Father reigns with providential care over all life and history in the created universe; He hears and answers prayer (I Chronicles 29:11-13; Matthew 7:11). He initiated salvation by sending His Son, and He is Father to those who by faith accept His Son as Lord and Savior (I John 4:9-10; John 3:16; John 1:12; Acts 16:31).

b. The Son became man, Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18). Being fully God and fully man. He revealed God through His sinless life, miracles and teaching (John 14:9; Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 4:23-24). He provided salvation through His atoning death in our place and by His bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:23-25). He ascended into heaven where He rules over all creation (Philippians 2:5-11). He intercedes for all believers and dwells in them as their ever present Lord (Romans 8:34; John 14:23).

c. The Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Scriptures (II Peter 1:21). Through this Word, He convicts individuals of their sinfulness and of the righteousness of Christ, draws them to the Savior, and bears witness to their new birth (James 1:18; John 16:7-11; I Thessalonians 1:5-6; Romans 8:16). At regeneration and conversion, the believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit indwells, seals and gives spiritual gifts to all believers for ministry in the church and society (Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 12:5-8; I Peter 4:10). He empowers, guides, teaches, fills, sanctifies and produces the fruit of Christ likeness in all who yield to Him (Acts 4:31; Romans 8:14; I Corinthians 2:10-13; Ephesians 5:18; II Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 5:16, 22-23).

3. We believe God created an order of spiritual beings called angels to serve Him and do His will (Psalm 148:1-5; Colossians 1:16). The holy angels are obedient spirits ministering to the heirs of salvation and glorifying God (Hebrews 1:6-7, 13-14). Certain angels, called demons, Satan being their chief, through deliberate choice revolted and fell from their exalted position (Revelation 12:7-9). They now tempt individuals to rebel against God (I Timothy 4:1; I Peter 5:8). Their destiny in hell has been sealed by Christ's victory over sin and death (Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10).

4. We believe God created man in His own image to have fellowship with Himself and to be steward over His creation

(Genesis 1:26-28). As a result, each person is unique, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect (Psalm 139:13-17). Through the temptation of Satan, Adam chose to disobey God; this brought sin and death to the human race and suffering to all creation (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; 8:22). Therefore, everyone is born with a sinful nature and needs to be reconciled to God (Romans 3:9-18, 23). Satan tempts people to rebel against God, even those who love Him (Ephesians 4:27; II Corinthians 2:11; Matthew 16:23). Nonetheless, everyone is personally responsible to God for thoughts, actions and beliefs and has the right to approach Him directly through Jesus Christ, the only mediator (Romans 14:12; I Timothy 2:5).

5. We believe salvation is redemption by Christ of the whole person from sin and death (II Timothy 1:9-10; I Thessalonians 5:23). It is offered as a free gift by God to all and must be received personally through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (I Timothy 2:4; Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 20:21). An individual is united to Christ by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27). As a child of God, the believer is acquitted of all guilt and brought into a new relationship of peace (Romans 5:1). Christians grow as the Holy Spirit enables them to understand and obey the Word of God (II Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:15; I Thessalonians 3:12).

6. We believe the Church is the body of which Christ is the head and all who believe in Him are members (Ephesians 1:22-23; Romans 12:4-5). Christians are commanded to be baptized upon profession of faith and to unite with a local church for mutual encouragement and growth in discipleship through worship, nurture, service and the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world (Acts 2:41-42, 47; Luke 24:45-48). Each church is a self-governing body under the lordship of Christ with all members sharing responsibility (Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-28). The form of government is understood to be congregational (Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:3-6; 15:22-23).

The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Savior Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-5). The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and of the cup by believers together as a continuing memorial of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. It is an act of thankful dedication to Him and serves to unite His people until He returns (I Corinthians 11:23-26).

To express unity in Christ, local churches form associations and a conference for mutual counsel, fellowship and a more effective fulfillment of Christ's commission (Acts 15; I Corinthians 6:1-3).

7. We believe religious liberty, rooted in Scripture, is the inalienable right of all individuals to freedom of conscience with ultimate accountability to God (Genesis 1:27; John 8:32; II Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:21; Acts 5:29). Church and state exist by the will of God. Each has distinctive concerns and responsibilities, free from control by the other (Matthew 22:21). Christians should pray for civil leaders, and obey and support government in matters not contrary to Scripture (I Timothy 2:1-4; Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-16). The state should guarantee religious liberty to all persons and groups regardless of their religious preferences, consistent with the common good.

8. We believe Christians, individually and collectively, are salt and light in society (Matthew 5:13-16). In a Christ like spirit, they oppose greed, selfishness and vice; they promote truth, justice and peace; they aid the needy and preserve the dignity of people of all races and conditions (Hebrews 13:5; Luke 9:23; Titus 2:12; Philippians 4:8-9; I John 3:16-17; James 2:1-4).

We affirm the family as the basic unit of society and seek to preserve its integrity and stability (Genesis 2:21-25; Ephesians 6:1-4).

9. We believe God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring all things to their appropriate end and establish the new heaven and the new earth (Ephesians 1:9-10; Revelation 21:1). The certain hope of the Christian is that Jesus Christ will return to the earth suddenly, personally and visibly in glory according to His promise (Titus 2:13; Revelation 1:7; 3:11; John 14:1-3). The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge mankind in righteousness (John 5:28-29). The unrighteous will be consigned to the everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41,46; Revelation 20:10). The righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and dwell forever with the Lord (Philippians 3:20-21; II Corinthians 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

ARTICLES OF THIS CONSTITUTION

Article 1: Name

This organization shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Elk Grove, California, and shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of California.

Article 2: Purpose

We exist to bring glory to God by turning all people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Article 3: Denominational Affiliation

We affiliate and cooperate with the North American Baptist Conference and the Northern California Association of the NAB Conference.

Article 4: Membership

A. Qualifications

Any person will be accepted into membership who has:

1. Accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of his/her life,
2. Publicly confessed their faith through Believer's Baptism by immersion,
3. Adopted the views of faith as set forth in this Constitution,
4. Attended our membership orientation class, and
5. Been interviewed by an elder concerning these issues.

B. Membership

One may come into membership through one of these methods as set forth in the Membership Manual:

1. Believer's Baptism by immersion.
2. Experience.
3. Restoration.

C. Discipline

A member who disregards his/her Christian responsibility (see Membership Manual), whose conduct is detrimental to a good testimony or who is living in opposition to clear biblical teaching may be removed by vote of the Elder Board after following the procedure set forth in Matthew 18:15-17. The purpose for this discipline is to seek the restoration of a member and to uphold the name of the Lord in the Church.

D. Removal

A person will be removed from membership for the following reasons as set forth in the Membership Manual:

1. Death.
2. Letter of transfer.
3. Removal by action of the Elder Board.

Article 5: Organization and Governance

A. Elder Board

A board of biblically qualified and congregationally elected elders shall be the governing body.

B. Deacons and Deaconess

Deacons and deaconesses may be appointed by the Elder Board in order to carry out specific and various responsibilities to assist in the oversight, leadership, purpose, and service of First Baptist Church of Elk Grove.

C. Committees

Committees shall be commissioned and decommissioned and delegated specific responsibilities as authorized by the Elder Board. The functions, service and procedures shall be established by written policies in the Ministerial & Staff Manual for these committees.

D. Pastors and Ministers

Pastors and ministers shall be hired to teach, preach, guide, shepherd, administer policies, and carry out various ministries in order to further the purpose of the church.

E. Other Hired Staff

Other staff shall be hired that are necessary to carry out the purpose and work of the church. Pursuant to written policies, the Elder Board may delegate the process of hiring non-pastoral/ministerial staff to other committees, pastors, or other church staff, as appropriate.

Article 6: Church Business Meetings

A. Annual Meeting

1. An Annual Business Meeting shall be held once a year during the month of May for the purposes of:
 - a) Receiving the financial report,
 - b) Approval of the church budget,
 - c) The election of elders, and
 - d) Any other business that is necessary.
2. Notice of the Annual Meeting together with the agenda shall be published for two consecutive Sundays prior to its convening.

B. Special Meetings

1. A Special Business Meeting may be called at any time by the Senior Pastor, the Elder Board Chairman, the Elder Board or five percent (5%) of qualified voting members.
2. Notice of this meeting shall be published for two consecutive Sundays prior to its convening. Said notice shall contain the purpose and agenda for this special meeting.

C. Congregational Consents and Approvals

The congregation must give its consent and approval for the following:

1. The hiring of the Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor, Business Administrator and other pastoral/ministerial staff personnel as defined in the Ministerial & Staff Manual.
2. The selection and approval of the men who shall serve as elders.
3. The approval of the annual church budget.
4. The acquisition, sale, or transfer of title of any real property.
5. The ratification and modification of the Constitution.
6. The incurrence of a debt or expenditure that is to be secured by any asset of the church in excess of 2.5% of total net worth.

D. Quorum for a Congregational Church Business Meeting

1. Those present and eligible to vote at a duly called and noticed church business meeting shall constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of business.
2. All members who are faithful in their attendance and who demonstrate a Christian spirit shall be eligible to vote at a duly authorized church meeting upon reaching the age of 18.
3. All votes requiring consent or approval of the congregation shall be deemed an official action by the congregation upon a three-fourths (75%) vote of the quorum at a business meeting.
4. No vote shall occur at the Annual or any Special Business meeting concerning an issue that did not \ appear

on the published agenda.

Article 7: Official Corporate Officers

A. *The corporate officers of this church shall be:*

1. Elder Board Chairman/Moderator;
2. Elder Board Vice Chairman/Vice Moderator;
3. Senior Pastor/CEO;
4. Executive Pastor/COO; and
5. Business Administrator/CFO.

B. The combination of two officers of the church, one of which must be the Elder Chairman or Vice Chairman are authorized to execute legal documents on behalf of the church corporation.

Article 8: Elders/Elder Board

A. *Qualifications*

The qualifications of an elder are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. These passages read, "It is a trustworthy statement; if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household well, how will he take care of the church of God?) and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." (1 Tim 3:1-7) "...if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." (Titus 1:6-9)(NASB)

B. *Primary Duties and Responsibilities*

1. *Spiritual Leadership*

- a) The Elder Board will pray regularly for the spiritual life and program of the church.
- b) The Elder Board will be responsible for seeking the mind of God in determining the direction and focus of the church.
- c) The Elder Board will be responsible for maintaining the doctrinal purity of the church.
- d) The Elder Board will be responsible for carrying out any disciplinary issues within the membership.
- e) The Elder Board will be responsible for counsel, guidance, ministering to the sick, and prayer as requested.
- f) The Elder Board will be responsible for the teaching of the Word of God.

2. *Administrative Leadership*

- a) The Elder Board is responsible for the hiring of all pastoral and ministerial staff with the consent of the congregation.
- b) The Elder Board is responsible for the dismissal of pastoral and ministerial staff.
- c) The Elder Board is responsible for making certain the church fulfills its purpose.
- d) The Elder Board is responsible for providing the organizational structure necessary to carry out the church's purpose.
- e) The Elder Board is responsible for approving and recommending all matters requiring congregational consent.

f) The Elder Board is responsible for reviewing and approving all the Manuals under which the various areas of the church function.

C. Number, Nomination and Election of Elders

1. The church shall be served by at least 12 duly elected men with no more than one-fourth (1/4) of the total number of elders coming from hired/employed pastoral staff, including the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor.
2. Nominations for an elder may be made by any member of the congregation. However, in order for a member to be nominated, he must meet the qualifications as established in the Constitution and the nominee name must be submitted to the elders for review and examination no later than 90 days before the Annual or Special meeting date. A non-pastoral elder's term shall run for three years and he may serve two (2) consecutive 3-year terms. The selection of elders shall occur so that no more than one-third (1/3) of the elders serving are termed out during any year.

D. Dismissal

1. Before the expiration of an elder's term, the congregation and the Elder Board may remove any elder from the board at any time for cause. The following are examples of cause:
 - a) Failure to meet the qualifications of an elder.
 - b) Teaching or practicing a doctrine contrary to the Articles of Faith.
2. Removal of an elder shall be by majority vote of the Elder Board or by majority vote of the congregation at a duly noticed meeting.

E. Vacancies

Vacancies on the Elder Board that result from any cause shall be filled by an appointment by the Elder Board, upon consent of the congregation. The elder chosen to fill a vacancy shall serve only the remaining term of the elder that left the board.

Article 9: Pastoral/Ministerial and Administrative Staff

A. Senior Pastor

1. The Senior Pastor shall report to the Elder Board.
2. Qualifications
The Senior Pastor shall meet the same qualifications as an elder as set forth in the Constitution and the Ministerial & Staff Manual.
3. Appointment/Calling of the Senior Pastor
The Elder Board shall appoint a Search Committee to undertake the search for the Senior Pastor. The candidate recommended by the Elder Board will be presented to the congregation for consent.
4. Primary Duties and Responsibilities
GENERAL: The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for the weekly teaching and preaching of God's word to the congregation.
 - a) The Senior Pastor or his designee(s) shall be responsible for the administration and general operations of the various ministries of the church.
 - b) The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for presenting an annual Organizational Chart to the Elder Board for approval.
 - c) The Senior Pastor shall be a voting member of the Elder Board, but shall not serve as its Chairman.
 - d) The Senior Pastor, together with the Executive Pastor and Business Administrator, shall provide input and make recommendations for staffing, budget and ministry to the Elder Board.
 - e) The specific job description, duties and responsibilities, and compensation are set forth in the Ministerial & Staff Manual.
5. Dismissal
The Senior Pastor shall be dismissed from office upon the vote of a majority of the non-staff members of

the Elder Board.

B. Executive Pastor

1. The Executive Pastor reports to the Senior Pastor.
2. Qualifications
The Executive Pastor shall meet the same qualification as an elder as set forth in the Constitution and the Ministerial & Staff Manual.
3. Appointment/Calling of the Executive Pastor
The Elder Board shall appoint a Search Committee to undertake the search for the Executive Pastor. The Senior Pastor shall be a voting member of this Search Committee. When a desirable candidate is found, the recommendation will be made to the Elder Board. The candidate recommended by the Elder Board will be presented to the congregation for consent.
4. Primary Duties and Responsibilities
 - a) The Executive Pastor shall be a member of any Personnel Committee, but he shall not serve as its Chairman.
 - b) The Executive Pastor shall be a voting member of the Elder Board, but he shall not serve as its Chairman.
 - c) The Executive Pastor shall be responsible for providing the personnel administration of his direct reports.
 - d) The specific job description, duties and responsibilities, and compensation are set forth in the Ministerial & Staff Manual.
5. Dismissal
The Executive Pastor shall be dismissed from office upon the vote of a majority of the non-staff members of the Elder Board and the Senior Pastor.

C. Business Administrator

1. The Business Administrator reports to the Senior Pastor.
2. Qualifications
The Business Administrator must be a member in good standing and regularly attend FBC worship services. Additional qualifications and a specific job description for this office are to be contained in the Ministerial & Staff Manual.
3. Appointment/Calling of the Business Administrator
The Elder Board shall appoint a Search Committee to undertake the search for the Business Administrator. The Senior Pastor shall be a voting member of this Search Committee. When a desirable candidate is found, the recommendation will be made to the Elder Board. The candidate recommended by the Elder Board will be presented to the congregation for consent.
4. Primary Duties and Responsibilities
 - a) The Business Administrator shall be a voting member of any Property or Finance Committees but shall not serve as its Chairperson. Upon the direction of the Senior Pastor or Elder Board, the Business Administrator shall attend the Elder Board meetings.
 - b) The Business Administrator generally shall be responsible for the maintenance, reporting and integrity of all financial, security, banking, budgeting, cash, inventory and property records for the church.
 - c) The Business Administrator shall report directly to the Elder Board all audits. The specific job description, duties and responsibilities, and compensation are set forth in the Ministerial & Staff Manual.
5. Dismissal
The Business Administrator shall be dismissed from office upon the vote of a majority of the non-staff members of the Elder Board and the Senior Pastor.

D. Other Pastoral/Ministerial Staff

1. Other pastoral/ministerial staff shall report pursuant to the organizational chart presented to and approved

annually by the Elder Board.

2. Qualifications

Depending upon the service, qualifications for other pastoral/ministerial staff are set forth in the Ministerial & Staff Manual.

3. Appointment/Calling

The Elder Board shall appoint a Search Committee to hire other pastoral/ministerial staff. When a desirable candidate is found, this person must first be approved by the Elder Board and then submitted to the church for consent.

4. Duties

The duties for other pastoral staff shall be established by a job description as set forth in the Ministerial & Staff Manual.

5. Dismissal

Pastoral/Ministerial staff shall be dismissed by a majority vote of the Elder Board.

Article 10: Fiscal year

The fiscal year shall be from July 1 to June 30 of each year.

Article 11: Amendments

The Constitution may be amended at any Regular or Special Business meeting of the church by a three-fourths (75%) vote of a quorum. Notice of such amendments shall be made available in writing to the congregation at least two consecutive weeks prior to the vote.

Article 12: Membership Access to all Manuals

Any member may view any operating manual of the church during regular church office hours.

Article 13: Rules of Order

The Spirit of Christ shall be observed at all discussions and meetings of the church and all auxiliary meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern on questions of parliamentary procedure not covered by this Constitution.