

FIFTH AMENDED BYLAWS  
FOR  
FAIRFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH  
May 5, 2023 DRAFT

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## INTRODUCTION AND PREAMBLE

The following Introduction and Preamble sections are not part of the FBC bylaws but are included to provide background and context for the governance requirements explicitly stated in the bylaws.

### a) Introduction

Fairfield Baptist Church (FBC) was incorporated April 19, 1993, as a non-profit corporation in the State of Texas. The purpose of Fairfield Baptist Church is to glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) through Evangelism/Missions, Christian education, Worship, Ministry/Service, and Fellowship.

#### Denominational Affiliation

Fairfield Baptist Church is an autonomous, independent, and self-governing corporation. We voluntarily affiliate with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state, and local expressions.

#### Titles and Terminology

By tradition and cultural influence, various titles have been used to describe church hierarchy, functional roles, and duties within the church. Scripture uses the English words “overseers, bishops, and pastors” interchangeably to refer to the office of elder. The New Testament term “pastor” (Ephesians 4:11), is a functional description, or title, of the role of elder stressing the care and feeding of the church as God's flock, just as "bishop/overseer" is a functional description of the role of elder stressing the governing or oversight of the church. We conclude therefore, that "elder", "pastor", and "bishop/overseer", when used in New Testament scripture, refer to the same office. For the purposes of the FBC bylaws, the terminology of “elder” and “deacon” is preferred, as used in the New Testament, for clarity and consistency when referring to the biblical offices and their biblical roles. Other terms or descriptors may be used to identify their functional role.

#### Governance

FBC follows the pattern found in scripture for church governance by faithful use of practices, policies, and procedures aligned with our scriptural beliefs. Leadership and authority to decide matters that impact our doctrine, beliefs, practices, and the wellbeing of the church are vested in men who have shown integrity and demonstrated care for the church body and who have been found to meet the qualifications of elders as described in scripture (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7). These men in authority are accountable to God for their love, care, oversight, and gentle leadership of the church members.

## Plurality of Elders

The pattern of governance found in the New Testament is that every church benefits from a plurality of godly elders who are responsible for leading and teaching the church. At FBC, this is accomplished through the appointment of a selected group of scripturally qualified elders onto an Elder Board.

## Church Structure and Hierarchy

FBC adheres to the following organizational structure and hierarchy:

### 1. Christ is the Sole Head of the Church

Christ alone is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22–23). All members of the church should seek to submit to Christ's headship and grow spiritually. We believe Christ is Lord over the church and secondly that he gives his church spiritual gifts and gifted persons to exercise servant-leadership and care for it.

### 2. Scriptural Offices

God has ordained the existence of only two scriptural offices in the church: elder and deacon. Each office has separate and distinct functional roles. Christ exercises his headship of the church by clearly specifying unique qualifications to determine those who may be permitted to hold these offices. Those holding these offices work in different arenas but in harmony to ensure the spiritual and physical needs of the members are well attended.

#### i. Office of Elder

Elders are responsible and accountable for matters of governance. Elders are vested with the authority and right to make decisions and give direction within their biblical purview. As used in the FBC bylaws, elders have a general biblical mandate to oversee, serve, and protect the body.

#### ii. Office of Deacon

Deacons have the biblical mandate of providing care and service to others under the leadership of the church elders.

### 3. Role of Members (Laity)

Members are those persons who have voluntarily chosen to enter a covenant relationship with Fairfield Baptist Church by fulfilling the membership qualifications and requirements specified in the FBC bylaws. Members may also be called "Laity" as a general term describing members of the church who are not serving in one of the two scriptural offices.

- Each member should seek to live in obedience and submission to Christ as they seek to discern His mind in line with the requirements of His Word. In this regard, scripture instructs church members to obey and submit to those in authority over them (Hebrews 13:17).
- Each member has a duty of corporate worship, service to the body, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship of others, and personal spiritual growth.

Members, deacons, and elders comprise the body of Fairfield Baptist Church, fitly joined by God's will and working together to build up the body of Christ, each fulfilling their role, and using their spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12) and skills to advance the Kingdom of Christ and fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)

b) Preamble to FBC Bylaws

The FBC bylaws are applicable to all FBC members and specify the expectations, methods, duties, authorities, and accountabilities for decision making and performing activities to accomplish our purpose. These contain the guiding principles, rules, and procedures FBC shall follow for church membership, for selecting elders and deacons, conducting church business, handling matters of conflict and discipline, holding meetings, and taking care of other corporate duties required in Texas. The FBC bylaws are not required to be filed with the State of Texas.

## **ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP**

The members of Fairfield Baptist Church are a community of believers committed to God and to one another and whose purpose is to fulfill the Great Commission by engaging in evangelism/mission activities, promoting personal spiritual growth and discipleship, serving others, worshipping together, and by encouraging, supporting, and praying for one another. We welcome all people who desire to come alongside us to follow the gospel of Christ and participate in our activities. This general corporate fellowship is open and available to all who desire to worship and fellowship with us in this purpose. We encourage those who meet with us to consider becoming members.

Church membership brings with it a higher level of personal commitment and expectation than simple corporate fellowship. FBC membership is a commitment to actively engage (Hebrews 10:24-25) and serve in this local body of Christ, rather than merely attending or participating with us (2 Corinthians 8:5-9).

Membership at FBC is a covenant relationship that results in a shared commitment between the individual and the church. For the individual, membership is taken as a statement of a lifestyle commitment to be a faithful follower of Christ in service and in concert with other FBC members. The church family shares its support, love, and care for the wellbeing of the individual. FBC has a responsibility for the spiritual care of each member through teaching, preaching, care for the congregation, and shepherding of the flock.

### **a) Membership Privileges**

Members have voluntarily chosen to affiliate with FBC and enjoy the privileges of worshipping and participating in religious activities with a body of like-minded believers.

Members have the privilege of joining with other members of FBC in the close relationship found in Christ. This relationship is expressed by fellowship, encouragement, care in times of difficulty, and service in the cause of Christ (1 John 1:3). It is also expressed through the committed shepherding care of deacons and elders in service to church members.

The privilege of participating in any decisions that are determined to require a formal vote is restricted to FBC members who meet the qualifications provided in the voting protocols.

Only members shall be allowed the privilege of holding the offices of elder or deacon or serve as teacher, leader, or any other position at FBC that includes teaching the Word of God or which has oversight responsibility of others. Exceptions to this may be permitted by the Elder Board.

b) Membership Responsibilities

Members are responsible to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner, adhering to FBC's doctrines, bylaws, policies, practices, and requirements, as specified in the FBC Membership Covenant. Members' actions, words, and behaviors shall consistently build up the body in unity. Members shall not abandon gathering together for corporate worship. Members' public behavior shall be of an honorable nature that protects and enhances the reputation of FBC and its individual members (Ephesians 4:31; 1 Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 5:21; Hebrews 13:17). Each member is responsible to:

- Submit to scriptures as the final authority on all issues (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)
- By God's grace, practice and demonstrate a Spirit-filled life through personal holiness and obedience to Christ's teachings by pursuing the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines (Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22)
- Fellowship and worship by assembling regularly with the corporate FBC body (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- Seek to serve. As the people of God, we are called to give our time, talents, spiritual gifts, and financial resources in service to others (Mark 10:35-45; John 13:12-15; Romans 12:3-21; 1 Corinthians 12; 2 Corinthians 4:5)
- Promote harmony and unity in the church body so the gospel may be proclaimed effectively (1 Corinthians 12:25-27)
- Work cooperatively with other members and church leadership to accomplish the corporate and spiritual purpose of FBC. Each member should pursue healthy relationships, respecting and caring for the other members of the body (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12; 2 Corinthians 1:12)
- Submit to the discipline of God, through His Holy Spirit, by following the biblical procedures for church discipline, with the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration (Psalm 141:5; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Hebrews 12:5-11)
- Diligently strive for unity and peace within the church (Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5)
- Work in accord within the doctrines and practices of FBC

c) Membership Requirements

Those who seek to become an FBC member must:

- Present a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their savior as evidenced by striving to live a life of Christian purity
- Have received believer's baptism by immersion



- Complete an FBC class that presents a high-level summary of primary Christian doctrine and FBC distinctives and connects participants to others seeking a deeper relationship with the church
- Participate in a conversation with an elder(s). The goal of this discussion is to assess spiritual health, answer questions that may have arisen in the FBC class, determine how to best meet their spiritual needs, and lovingly protect the church membership
- Agree to be bound by and follow the bylaws

Following the completion of all requirements listed above, the Elder Board shall meet to discuss and vote on all prospective members. Upon Board approval for membership, those eligible shall affirm the FBC Membership Covenant and be added to the church roll, which officially initiates membership. A permanent record of the decision shall be maintained, and new members shall be presented to the church body.

Upon completion of the requirements of this section the individual shall be added to the membership role and called an “FBC Member” for the purposes of these bylaws.

d) Termination of Membership

Names may be removed from the FBC membership roll due to an individual’s particular circumstances, in order to maintain the accuracy and currency of the roll, for disciplinary reasons, or other purposes. A member may voluntarily request to be removed from the FBC roll by written request. The authority to modify or expunge records of the church roll is vested in the Elder Board. In the event that an individual is subject to disciplinary action, they remain bound to the FBC bylaw provisions until the disciplinary actions are completed.

Any decision to terminate an individual’s membership shall not be determined by a single individual nor without a thorough assessment and appropriate documentation of the events, actions, facts, and circumstances leading up to the decision (See Article VII).

Termination of membership for any reason results in the immediate cessation of all membership privileges.

## ARTICLE II. STAFF

### a) Staff Positions

FBC staff are comprised of paid individuals that cover a variety of ministerial and non-ministerial duties. These staff are divided into:

Vocational Elders – Paid staff who also hold the office of elder (See Article III)

- Lead Pastor – Responsible for overall church operations, including defining roles and responsibilities of all staff members. The Lead Pastor is accountable to the Elder Board.
- Other Pastor(s) – Elders responsible for specific ministries as defined by the Lead Pastor and Elder Board.

Ministers – Paid staff that perform ministerial duties who are not elders. These are collectively referred to as Ministry Staff herein. Ministers are accountable to the Lead Pastor

Support Staff – Paid staff who support the operations of the church but are not elders or ministers

Interim Staff – In the circumstances that temporary vacancies occur in staff positions that need to be filled on a long-term basis, individuals may be hired as interim employees until the vacancies can be filled by regular, full-time, paid individuals. Persons serving for an interim period of time are not required to be members of FBC

### b) Structure, Staffing, and Responsibilities

The staff shall be comprised of Vocational Elders, Ministry Staff, and other Support Staff as required. The Lead Pastor shall work under the leadership, supervision, and direction of the Elder Board. Other Pastors shall work under the leadership, supervision, and direction of the Lead Pastor. Ministry Staff shall work under the leadership, supervision, and direction of the Lead Pastor or a designated supervisor. Support Staff shall work under the leadership, supervision, and direction of the Lead Pastor or his designee. Job descriptions for Pastor or Ministry Staff positions shall be prepared through a coordinated effort between the Lead Pastor and the Elder Board.

In cooperation with the Elder Board, the Lead Pastor shall have the authority to adjust staff roles and responsibilities and modify organizational reporting structure as deemed necessary to advance the needs of the church.

### c) Vocational Elder and Minister Employment and Termination

It is the Elder Board's responsibility to call a Vocational Elder or Minister for service at FBC. They have the authority to examine, evaluate, and call prospective Vocational Elders (including the Lead Pastor) and Ministers. Before calling either,

the Elder Board will notify the church body of this intention and will give the members a 21-day notice to provide input before this decision is finalized.

It is also the Elder Board's responsibility to terminate a Minister's employment at FBC. Removal of a Minister requires a vote by the Board.

For termination of the Lead Pastor, a written notice of his proposed removal shall be given by the Elder Board to the Lead Pastor 10-days prior to the meeting at which the action to effectuate the removal shall be taken. This action is to ensure that the Lead Pastor is given the opportunity to prepare for his defense and present this at the Elder Board meeting.

d) Pastor and Minister Position Vacancies

The Elder Board will have authority to select the process used to either temporarily or permanently fill a Vocational Elder or Minister position. At the discretion of the Board, a search committee may be established.

e) Support Staff Employment and Termination

Support staff may be employed or terminated through decision by the Lead Pastor or his designee. The Elder Board shall be informed of this decision by the Lead Pastor.

### **ARTICLE III. ELDERS**

FBC shall maintain and support the scriptural office of elder. This office is one of shepherding, protecting, and overseeing the flock of FBC. The office of elder is an ordained position, held by men who model a godly lifestyle by meeting qualifications laid out in scripture (Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:1-7). These qualifications are interpreted for use at FBC in the Elder Board Position Description.

a) Elder Board

At FBC, this responsibility is fulfilled by those specifically selected out of the FBC corporate body of elders for service on the Elder Board. The Elder Board is the central leadership and governance body at FBC. Those in service on the Elder Board are given the charge to apply their diversity of skills and spiritual gifts to lead the larger corporate body in gentleness and love and to protect the body.

Elders who are not Vocational Elders (defined in Article II) are herein called “Lay Elders.”

The Elder Board shall be comprised of Vocational Elders and Lay Elders. The Elder Board will contain a minimum of five (5) elders and must have more Lay Elders than Vocational Elders. The Lead Pastor shall have a standing position on the Elder Board. In the event of a vacancy or inability of the Lead Pastor to serve as an Elder Board member, an interim pastor or another minister may be chosen to fill that vacancy, and in that event, he will be accountable to the Elder Board. The Elder Board may add elders when deemed necessary to accomplish duties or to increase the group’s breadth of knowledge, skills, and capabilities. The Elder Board members will make every effort to present candidates to maintain the minimum required by these bylaws. In the event that the five (5) elder plurality cannot be met, FBC members will be requested to vote at called business meeting(s) on the following: the addition or removal of Elder Board members or ministry staff, budget, and bylaw changes when required. The Elder Board is prohibited from acting on these issues when below the minimum.

b) Elder Selection

The Elder Board may appoint new elders to the Board only after a thorough examination of an individual’s spiritual and biblical qualifications, leadership abilities, capabilities, and integrity. FBC will ordain those men and may also recognize elders who have been previously ordained at a church with similar beliefs. Ordained elders shall retain the biblical office as long as they meet the biblical qualifications.

The Elder Board shall present a list of prospective elders to the members. Members shall have 21 days to provide specific feedback or concerns regarding any potential elders. Feedback may be given by providing signed, written comments to the Elder Board. Upon completion of the comment period, the Elder Board shall consider all feedback, determine an appropriate course of action, and conclude the selection

process. Members shall be subsequently advised of the names of the new Elder Board members.

Elders may serve on the Elder Board for three consecutive years. It is suggested that after three years of service an elder take a one-year rest period before returning to service. Elders may extend the third year into a fourth year of service but are then required to take a one-year rest before returning to the Elder Board. This is not a requirement for the Lead Pastor.

At any point, an elder may choose to transition off the Elder Board. If stepping aside is for a predetermined amount of time, when that time is concluded, the elder may rejoin the Elder Board. If the stepping aside is for an undetermined amount of time, the elder shall state their request for returning and the Board will determine when rejoining is appropriate.

c) Elder Removal

If it becomes apparent that an elder should no longer continue to serve on the Elder Board, he may either withdraw or be removed. An individual may be removed by a 60% vote of the Elder Board. Members shall also be advised of elders transitioning off the Elder Board. A written notice of the proposed removal of any elder shall be given to the Elder Board 10-days prior to the meeting at which the action to effectuate the removal of that elder shall be taken. This action is to ensure that the elder is given the opportunity to prepare and present his defense.

d) Elder Responsibilities

Ordained elders at FBC are responsible for carrying out the scriptural duties of elders for their churches. These responsibilities include:

- Teaching / Preaching – Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9
- Protecting / Shepherding – Acts 20:17, 28-31
- Exhorting / Rebuking – 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 3:13-17; 4:2; Titus 1:9
- Visiting / Praying for the Sick – James 5:14; Acts 6:2-4
- Settling Disputes / Judging Matters of Doctrine – Acts 15:1-2, 6; 16:4
- Leading / Overseeing / Governing – 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:7; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4

e) Duties of Guardianship

The Elder Board holds a position of trust that is both spiritual and corporeal. The Board has an obligation to act in the best interests of and for the benefit of Fairfield Baptist Church as a corporation and as representatives of its body of members.

The Board, in all its governing activities, shall exercise at all times:

- The duty of care – all members of the Board shall inform themselves prior to making a decision using the applicable material and information reasonably

available to them. The Board must exercise reasonable care and judgment when relying on the information.

- The duty of loyalty – all members of the Board shall act without personal economic conflict. The Board shall not use its position of confidence and trust to further their private interests.
- The duty of good faith – all members of the Board shall advance interests of the church and membership and fulfill their duties without violating the law.
- The duty of confidentiality – Members of the Board shall not disclose confidential or private information to gain benefit or advantage.
- The duty of disclosure – Members of the Board shall act with candor. In certain circumstances, this requires the Board to disclose to the FBC members the pertinent facts and circumstances relevant to the Board's decision.
- The duty to avoid conflicts of interest – Members of the Board shall not act on behalf of FBC or exercise their influence or authority in any matter in which they have or can have a direct or indirect interest that conflicts or may conflict with the interests of FBC. This applies in particular to the exploitation of property, information, or opportunity (including hiring and firing employees, voting matters, staff pay raises, and financial decisions). Members of the Board shall fully disclose the nature of any conflict of interest and withdraw from discussion and any voting on the matter.

f) Elder Board Meetings

Meetings are restricted to those currently serving on the Elder Board and are held to accomplish the governance and shepherding of the church.

Board meetings to discuss church business shall be held at a frequency required to address important matters in a timely manner. A minimum attendance of a simple majority of the Elder Board is required for a quorum.

While meetings are closed to FBC members, they may submit a written request to the Elder Board to present an inquiry, petition, or to present and discuss a proposal for action on behalf of FBC.

On issues that need decisions or approval, we will strive for unanimity. When this is not possible, we will settle for consensus. If a matter cannot be settled in these ways, it may be decided by a 60% majority of the entire Elder Board.

The Elder Board will select one of its lay members to act as Lead Elder. The Lead Elder is responsible for setting a regular meeting schedule, developing an agenda for each meeting, facilitating the proceedings, securing input from all participants, keeping the meeting on task, promoting effective team dynamics, and capturing actions and decisions.

g) Elder Board Operation and Function

Members of the Elder Board have equal authority according to scripture, regardless of functional role or title. The Elder Board shall apportion duties amongst themselves according to their spiritual gifts and capabilities. Board members may apply their skills and spiritual gifts in different areas. There is no distinction in authority or hierarchy between these, but only in function and division of labor.

Authority to make decisions and act to shepherd, protect, and oversee FBC shall be vested in the Elder Board.

Member Votes

Except as otherwise specified in these bylaws, certain Elder Board authorities and decision-making rights are reserved for and vested in FBC members. These matters include:

- Decisions to incur debt above the threshold noted in Article IX.h)
- Bylaw provisions and amendments that impact member voting privileges
- Merger, dissolution, or termination of the FBC corporate entity
- Purchase or sale of FBC real estate or buildings

Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, the Elder Board may obtain input from members on other matters by binding vote, non-binding vote, or any other means as determined to be appropriate to the circumstance.

Documentation

The key decisions, important findings, and outcomes of Board meetings shall be clearly documented in a manner that the resolution of topics can be reviewed as needed by future Elder Board members. A record of decisions shall be prepared for each item requiring a decision or action. The record shall include pertinent information such as date and location, list of decision makers, and outcome for each matter on the agenda.

Reporting Requirements

The Elder Board shall provide information pertaining to FBC direction and trends, finances, general staffing, strategic and tactical decisions taken, and other matters that may have significant impact on the body.

## **ARTICLE IV. DEACONS**

FBC shall maintain and support the scriptural office of deacon. This office is one of service and spiritual influence. Deacons at Fairfield Baptist Church shall serve under the direction of the deacon officers as they fulfil their role of ministry and service to the body. Deacon officers shall operate under the direction of the Elder Board. This office of deacon is an ordained position, held by men who model a godly lifestyle by meeting scriptural qualifications, exemplifying Christ-like behaviors, and demonstrating a servant heart attitude (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Deacons and non-ordained FBC members may collaborate, serve together, or work independently to achieve ministry and service objectives.

FBC members may propose new deacon candidates for the office of deacon. Candidates undergo an examination, and those that meet the scriptural requirements and demonstrate satisfactory character may be considered eligible for the office of deacon. The Elder Board approves the final appointment and deacon ordination following a 21-day period for member input.

Full descriptions of qualifications, roles, responsibilities, selection process, and the deacon body structure and organization are detailed in the FBC Deacon Handbook.



## **ARTICLE V. FINANCES**

a) Financial Controls and Practices

The Elder Board shall ensure financial controls and practices are established to safeguard, oversee, and document the finances of the church. Such controls and practices include establishing an annual operating budget, receiving and distributing funds, tracking and reporting expenditures against budget, establishing and maintaining appropriate cash reserves, and tracking and reporting contributions. Documentation and practices required to maintain our non-profit corporation classification and any state sales tax exemption status shall be maintained.

b) Annual Budget

The Elder Board shall oversee FBC's income, spending, and use of financial resources based on an annual operating budget plan. The church will endeavor to maintain a positive cash flow overall for each fiscal year.

A financial report shall be made available to the membership at a regular business meeting or by other means as may be established.

c) Church Debt

Borrowing of money is permitted under certain conditions. It is the practice of Fairfield Baptist Church to restrict/limit the use of debt. In general, it is the intent to plan and practice good stewardship such that there are few and limited circumstances which require incurring debt. Prior to borrowing money and taking on new or additional debt, the Elder Board will exercise appropriate care and due diligence.

The Elder Board shall evaluate any legal, regulatory, or voluntary action that would result in the addition of a secured loan, lien, or other encumbrance on the corporate entity of FBC and shall be responsible for deciding an appropriate course of action that is in accordance with and permitted in the bylaws.

d) Trustees

At least three (3) Trustees shall be appointed by the Elder Board.

The Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer ownership of any real property without a specific vote of the Elder Board authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the Trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the donation, sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of any real property where signatures are required. At least two Trustee signatures shall be required for any legal documents concerning real property.

In the event a Trustee is unwilling or otherwise unable to satisfactorily fulfill their obligations and term of service, the Elder Board is authorized to remove said Trustee at any time and appoint a replacement.

Any change in a Trustee appointment shall be communicated to the church members in a business meeting.

## **ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS**

a) **Worship Services**

Worship services shall be conducted on a regular basis, generally intended to be weekly. The schedule for weekly services will be clearly communicated using appropriate means.

b) **Business Meetings**

Business meetings shall be held for a variety of purposes such as sharing information with the congregation and soliciting member input on matters of import.

Meetings to report and discuss church business should be held at a frequency required to address matters in a timely manner, but at least quarterly.

Business meetings are scheduled or called by the Lead Pastor or Lead Elder. Members who wish to request a business meeting may do so by submitting a written request to the Lead Pastor or Lead Elder stating the business need for the request. This request will be reviewed by the Elder Board, and the subsequent course of action will be decided. The Lead Pastor or Lead Elder will provide a written response to the requesting party if the request is rejected.

Where feasible, notice for business meetings should be given sufficiently in advance to promote awareness and ample opportunity for members to attend. Such notice shall be communicated using multiple and varied forms of media as determined by the Elder Board to be effective and as specified in Article IX.i).

The Lead Pastor, Lead Elder, or their designee shall serve as the moderator at church business meetings. The moderator shall signal the beginning of each business meeting by call to order and shall announce conclusion of the meeting by adjournment. Records of meetings which capture the essence of the business conducted and any decisions or actions to be taken shall be maintained by the Elder Board and available upon member request.

## **ARTICLE VII. DISCIPLINE**

Fairfield Baptist Church practices biblical discipline in manner described in Matthew 18:15-17. The purpose of biblical discipline is to correct sin and protect the FBC body from the influence of sin. Biblical discipline is not administered as a punishment but rather for the purpose of restoration to fellowship. A member may become subject to biblical discipline in the event of persistent neglect or abandonment of their covenant membership responsibilities.

Members have individual freedom to exercise the manner of their personal worship and fellowship within the bounds of their corporate membership of FBC. However, FBC members must not behave in opposition to FBC doctrinal beliefs, organizational structure, or bylaw provisions, nor in any manner which creates, induces or promotes controversy or dissension in the body by so doing.

Elders have authority to protect and shepherd the body in matters of member conduct, disputes and conflict, and administering church discipline. The Elder Board shall practice discipline in accordance with scripture in order to promote unity and take action to foster reconciliation when parties are in conflict over matters which have become or are potentially disruptive or hurtful to individual persons or to the church body. The Elder board shall initiate appropriate measures and is accountable to carry out measured, biblical discipline when it is determined to be warranted.

### **a) Addressing Sin**

The goal of church discipline is to restore the church member practicing sin. When an FBC member is concerned about the behavior of another member, the member shall address the matter as follows:

- The concerned person shall prayerfully examine himself (Matthew 7:3-5).
- The concerned person shall attempt to resolve the matter personally and privately with the member believed to be practicing sin (Matthew 18:15).
- If the member in sin does not repent, the concerned person will bring one or two (1-2) independent witnesses to the member to seek to bring him to repentance and resolve the situation (Matthew 18:16).
- If the member in sin rejects their attempt and fails to repent, the matter may be brought before the Elder Board who will determine what course of action seems wisest.

If the Elder Board determines that membership must be terminated for cause, the affected member person will be notified. The proceedings and outcome may be disclosed to the congregation to break fellowship including participation in religious activities.

## **ARTICLE VIII. INDEMNIFICATION**

Fairfield Baptist Church may elect to indemnify any person who may serve or who has served in good faith and in the course and scope of their duties and functions, at any time as an officer, elder, or employee or volunteer of the corporation. Indemnification is not provided in the event of gross misconduct / negligence, or illegal actions.

## ARTICLE IX. VOTING PROTOCOLS FOR MEMBERS

Business meetings, or portions of business meetings, held for the specific purpose of member deliberation and decision making by formal vote shall rely on parliamentary procedures that incorporate the basic principles of:

- Majority rule – the principle of decision is by majority vote
- Minority rights – some decisions must require greater support than a simple majority
- Member privileges – members may attend, speak, participate, and vote. Non-members cannot vote
- One question at a time – only one motion may be pending at a time
- One person, one vote – each eligible member has one vote, equally weighted to others' votes

a) Eligibility to Vote

The privilege of participating in decisions requiring formal member vote is restricted to FBC members.

b) Attendance Requirement

FBC members must attend the business meeting in person to vote on matters before the church unless specifically stated otherwise in the voting procedures established for the matter to be decided.

c) Quorum

FBC Members who are eligible to vote and in attendance at the meeting shall constitute a quorum at business meetings.

d) Types of Voting

The Elder Board, at its option may seek to obtain a decision, input, or advice from members by using binding votes, non-binding votes, or other means as determined to be appropriate to the circumstance. Article III.g) lists the matters that require a binding member vote.

### Binding Vote

An affirmative binding vote will determine the outcome (either for or against) of the item being proposed. The expressed requisite majority opinion (as specified for the particular vote) will carry the force for implementing or precluding the proposed change. A negative binding vote defeats the action that is being considered. The Elder Board cannot overrule the vote and cannot act in non-conformance to the outcome of the vote.

### Non-Binding Vote

This vote is advisory in nature and may or may not result in action being taken as voted by the majority on the matter being considered. The Elder Board may but is not required to take any action nor to act in conformity with the majority vote.

e) Method of Voting

The method of voting and procedure shall be established for each business meeting called for the purpose of member vote. The method of vote shall be determined by the Elder Board and shall be appropriate for the gravity of the matter being decided. All binding votes shall be by signed, written ballot. Non-binding voting for other matters may be done by general consent (no objections), voice (aye/nay), show of hands, or written ballot.

f) Vote Tabulation

Collection and tally of the written votes shall be performed by a group of at least three non-related members. All written votes shall be collected, the identity and eligibility of each voter confirmed, and results tallied as soon as practicable following the vote. In the event the tabulation of results cannot be completed the day of the vote, the ballots shall be secured until they can be accurately tallied.

g) Recordkeeping

A permanent record shall be kept of the disposition of items presented for action at a business meeting. The record shall include pertinent information such as date and location, motions and amendments, and outcome for each matter on the agenda.

h) Approval Requirements for Actions Requiring Member Authorization:

- Bylaw Changes Impacting Member Voting Privileges – These bylaws shall be amended, modified, or nullified solely by an affirmative, binding written vote of two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of FBC members present and eligible to vote
- Dissolution – An affirmative, binding written vote of two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of FBC members present and eligible to vote shall be necessary to approve a permanent cessation of operation and dissolution of Fairfield Baptist Church
- Debt – An affirmative, binding written vote of two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of FBC members present and eligible to vote shall be necessary to approve taking or adding new debt if the cumulative debt is greater than 25% of the average of the prior three completed calendar years' actual operating expense
- Purchase or Sale of FBC Real Property – An affirmative, binding written vote of two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of FBC members present and eligible to vote shall be necessary to approve the purchase or sale of FBC real estate or permanent buildings

i) Voting Notice Periods

Notice of a member vote shall be given 21 days in advance of the business meeting in which a vote as noted in Article III.g) is set to occur. Notice shall be communicated

using multiple and varied forms of media as determined by the Elder Board to be effective. Oral announcement at any Sunday worship service is deemed to be one means of notice. Written notification to all FBC members at their home address is not required.



## **ARTICLE X. DISSOLUTION OF FAIRFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH**

### **a) General Provisions**

FBC is a non-profit corporation in the State of Texas, established for the purpose of conducting religious worship and activities. FBC has established tax-exempt status under the provisions of Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).

FBC is fully autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs independent of any denominational control. FBC affiliates voluntarily with the Southern Baptist Convention.

The assets of FBC are held in the name of Fairfield Baptist Church (TIN-76-0359402).

Members have no rights in, nor ownership of, the property or assets of FBC.

### **b) Act of Closure**

Any corporate decision to permanently cease operation of Fairfield Baptist Church shall be initiated by a formal recommendation at a business meeting with a quorum in attendance. The approval to cease operation shall require an affirmative vote in accordance with Article IX.

An affirmative vote shall authorize the Elder Board or its designee(s) to take any and all subsequent actions, make payments, reserve funds for continuing liabilities, sell and distribute assets, and make legal filings and notifications necessary to complete the cessation of operation and dissolution of the corporation. The dissolution of the corporation will be done according to applicable state law, including distribution of assets.

### **c) Dissolution and Distribution of FBC Assets**

Upon discontinuance of FBC by dissolution or otherwise, any assets remaining after payment, or provision for payment, of all debts and liabilities of this corporation shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation, or corporation which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, and/or religious purposes and which has established its tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).

## **ARTICLE XI. DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION**

In the event that the Elder Board believes the church should require a change in the denominational affiliation, the Elder Board shall recommend such change at a business meeting. A 21-day period will be provided to allow for input by the members of FBC. At the conclusion of the 21-day period, the Elder Board will act in any such way it believes is best for the overall good, health, and scriptural adherence of FBC.

## ARTICLE XII. FBC DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

### a) Affirmations of Faith

- God – God is the creator and ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God (Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Corinthians 13:14)
- Humanity – We believe that all humanity is created in the Image of God (the Imago Dei) and possesses intrinsic worth and dignity. God made both male and female to be in His own image (Genesis 1:27-30). God set apart humanity as image-bearers; every human being is sacred. All men and women are designed to reflect God in His creation (Genesis 5:1-2, 9:6). God declared the created order to be very good (Genesis 1:31), that man and woman manage and govern over creation (Psalm 8:3-6). They have equal access to God through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 2:11, 10:9-12). God has specifically created each person with purpose to resemble His creation mandate and to represent His glory. All humanity is corrupted by sin, passed down from Adam (Job 15:14, Psalm 14:2-3, 51:5, Ecclesiastes 7:20, 9:3, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 5:12, Ephesians 2:2-3)
- Eternity – Man was created to exist forever. He will either exist eternally separated from God by sin or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is hell. To be eternally in union with him is eternal life. Heaven and hell are places of eternal existence (John 3:16; John 2:25; John 5:11-13; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:15; 1 John 5:12; Matthew 25:31-46)
- God the Son, Jesus Christ – Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all men by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to heaven's glory and will return again to earth to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1:3, 4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14, 15; Titus 2:13)
- Salvation – Salvation is a gift from God to man. Man can never make up for his sin by self-improvement or good works—only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can man be saved from sin's penalty. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8, 9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1)
- Eternal Security – Because God gives man eternal life through Jesus Christ, the believer is secure in salvation for eternity. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian (John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; 10:10, 14; 1 Peter 1:3-5)
- God the Spirit – The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what

is right. The Christian seeks to live under his control daily (2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16, 17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:1)

- Scripture – The Bible is God’s Word to all men. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mixture of error (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5)
- Baptism – Baptism by immersion symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and is your public declaration that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Baptism does not save you but shows the world that you have already been saved. And while baptism is not required for salvation, it is a biblical command and demonstrates your love and obedience to Christ (Colossians 2:12; Acts 2:41; Ephesians 2: 8-9; Matthew 28:19-20)
- Communion – Communion, or the Lord’s Supper, is an ordinance given to all believers by Jesus Christ to remember his sacrifice for us and to symbolize the new covenant. The elements of bread and wine or juice are symbols of Christ’s broken body and shed blood. Communion is not a means of salvation. Rather, it is a testament of a believer’s faith in the atoning work of the cross (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:19,20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29)

b) Statement on Marriage, Sexuality, and Gender

We believe that:

- The term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in scripture
- God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. Our church will not perform, celebrate, or participate in ceremonies in conflict with these or other beliefs
- Any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, or any attempt to change one’s sex or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God. God has designed man and woman to be distinct in their biological birth sex that He has given and is not interchangeable or chosen
- In order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is required that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, shall abide by and agree to this statement on marriage and sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly

- God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ
- Every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church

(Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:18-25; Exodus 20:14; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:18-19; Hebrews 13:4)

## EPILOGUE

These Fifth Amended Bylaws of Fairfield Baptist Church dated **June 11, 2023** supersede and replace the Fourth Amended Bylaws of Fairfield Baptist Church - As Adopted October 2010 as well as the Constitution of Fairfield Baptist Church.

This work is the result of a collaborative effort and input of pastoral staff, the Church Council, and various other advisors and contributors. The following persons shared their time, knowledge, and godly wisdom in the development of these Fifth Amended Bylaws for Fairfield Baptist Church.

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### Other Advisors

- Outside counsel