

1                                   **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF**  
2                                   **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF NEWMAN, CALIFORNIA**  
3                                   **Affirmed on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

4  
5                                   **PREAMBLE**

6       That all things may be done decently and in order, and that we may more readily help one  
7       another in our Christian service as members of the First Baptist Church of Newman, we adopt  
8       the following constitution and by-laws as methods of our works:  
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11                                   **ARTICLE I – NAME AND OBJECT**

12       *SECTION 1. Name:*

13       This organization shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Newman, California.  
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15       *SECTION 2. Object:*

16       This church, believing in the Bible as the Inspired Word of God and as the sole authority for  
17       faith and practice, and adhering to all the teachings of Jesus Christ, declares its purposes: (a) to  
18       maintain regular services, both devotional and for public worship; (b) to proclaim earnestly the  
19       Gospel Message and to urge its personal acceptance; (c) to cooperate heartily, by prayer, gift,  
20       and service, in the effort to further the Kingdom of Christ; (d) to encourage, in every possible  
21       way a life lived for the glory of God as a disciple of Jesus Christ; and (e) to secure as far as  
22       possible the practice of true religion and Christian philanthropy (James 1:27) as revealed and  
23       taught in the sacred scriptures.  
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26                                   **ARTICLE II – STATEMENT OF FAITH**

27       The statement of faith of this church is the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. Below is the  
28       abbreviated statement.  
29

30       *I. The Scriptures*

31       The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man.  
32       It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and  
33       truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and  
34       trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to  
35       the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all  
36       human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to  
37       Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.  
38

39       *II. God*

40       There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being,  
41       the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all  
42       other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all  
43       things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we  
44       owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as  
45       Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature,  
46       essence, or being.

47       *A. God the Father*

48       God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the

49 stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing,  
50 all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith  
51 in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

### 52 *B. God the Son*

53 Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy  
54 Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon  
55 Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with  
56 mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His  
57 substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He  
58 was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who  
59 was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right  
60 hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the  
61 reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to  
62 consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever  
63 present Lord.

### 64 *C. God the Holy Spirit*

65 The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the  
66 Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He  
67 convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects  
68 regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ.  
69 He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which  
70 they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His  
71 presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the  
72 stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship,  
73 evangelism, and service.

## 74 75 *III. Man*

76 Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as  
77 the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's  
78 creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with  
79 freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human  
80 race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his  
81 original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin.  
82 Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under  
83 condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to  
84 fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God  
85 created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every  
86 race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

## 87 88 *IV. Salvation*

89 Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus  
90 Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer.  
91 In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and  
92 glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

93 A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new  
94 creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through  
95 conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the  
96 Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

97 Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus  
98 Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

99 B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of  
100 all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a  
101 relationship of peace and favor with God.

102 C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set  
103 apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity  
104 through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace  
105 should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

106 D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of  
107 the redeemed.

108

### 109 ***V. God's Purpose of Grace***

110 Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies,  
111 and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means  
112 in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is  
113 infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

114 All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by  
115 His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers  
116 may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their  
117 graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on  
118 themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

119

### 120 ***VI. The Church***

121 A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of  
122 baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing  
123 the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges  
124 invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each  
125 congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a  
126 congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural  
127 officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church,  
128 the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

129 The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the  
130 redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

131

### 132 ***VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper***

133 Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and  
134 the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried,  
135 and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to  
136 walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the  
137 dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to  
138 the Lord's Supper.

139 The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through  
140 partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and  
141 anticipate His second coming.

142

### 143 ***VIII. The Lord's Day***

144 The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It  
145 commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship  
146 and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be  
147 commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.  
148

### 149 ***IX. The Kingdom***

150 The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular  
151 kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the  
152 realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ.  
153 Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on  
154 earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of  
155 this age.  
156

### 157 ***X. Last Things***

158 God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According  
159 to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will  
160 be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to  
161 Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies  
162 will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.  
163

### 164 ***XI. Evangelism and Missions***

165 It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus  
166 Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy  
167 Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a  
168 spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the  
169 teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all  
170 nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal  
171 witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of  
172 Christ.  
173

### 174 ***XII. Education***

175 Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures  
176 of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The  
177 new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of  
178 education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general  
179 benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An  
180 adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's  
181 people.

182 In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and  
183 academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and  
184 never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by  
185 the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct  
186 purpose for which the school exists.  
187

### 189 ***XIII. Stewardship***

190 God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to  
191 Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel,  
192 and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him

193 with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to  
194 them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians  
195 should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and  
196 liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

197

#### 198 ***XIV. Cooperation***

199 Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may  
200 best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no  
201 authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies  
202 designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner.  
203 Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the  
204 missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.  
205 Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for  
206 common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various  
207 Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such  
208 cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His  
209 Word as revealed in the New Testament.

210

#### 211 ***XV. The Christian and the Social Order***

212 All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives  
213 and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the  
214 establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they  
215 are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the  
216 spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and  
217 all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should  
218 work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We  
219 should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from  
220 conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and  
221 society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In  
222 order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any  
223 good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty  
224 to Christ and His truth.

225

#### 226 ***XVI. Peace and War***

227 It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In  
228 accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end  
229 to war.

230 The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is  
231 the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application  
232 of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince  
233 of Peace.

234

#### 235 ***XVII. Religious Liberty***

236 God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and  
237 commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state  
238 should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of  
239 its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should  
240 be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty  
241 of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of

242 God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ  
243 contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose  
244 penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support  
245 of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the  
246 right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and  
247 propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.  
248

### 249 ***XVIII. The Family***

250 God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of  
251 persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

252 Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is  
253 God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man  
254 and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual  
255 expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

256 The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The  
257 marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as  
258 Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to  
259 lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband  
260 even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as  
261 is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband  
262 and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

263 Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are  
264 to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children  
265 spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving  
266 discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.  
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## **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

### 270 ***SECTION 1. Definition of Membership:***

271 The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith in the Lord Jesus  
272 Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by striving to live a life consistent  
273 with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine, practice and the church covenant of  
274 this Church, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have been received into its  
275 membership according to the By-Laws of this Church. This church will not accept into  
276 membership any who do not believe in the virgin birth of Christ, His atoning death and  
277 resurrection, or in the whole Bible as being the Word of God.  
278

### 279 ***SECTION 2. Admission by Letter:***

280 Members from Baptist churches or other churches holding like faith may become a candidate for  
281 membership with us requesting a letter of transfer from such churches and accepting the aims  
282 and ideals of the church as expressed in the church covenant, and also upon making a suitable  
283 enlistment for worship, service, and giving. If such credentials should be of older date than one  
284 (1) year prior to their presentation, the applicant may be required to furnish additional  
285 information.  
286

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### 288 ***SECTION 3. Admission by Experience or Restoration:***

289 All applicants for membership other than by baptism by immersion or by letter – that is by a  
290 Christian experience or by statement if previously baptized, or by restoration – shall be received  
291 into the church if they have been properly baptized.

292  
293 SECTION 4. Candidacy:

294 A person who comes forward for church membership candidacy shall converse with the Pastor(s)  
295 and or Elder(s) about their desire to join as a member of the church. The process in which one is  
296 brought into membership of this local body shall be performed per the By-Laws of this church.

297  
298 SECTION 5. Transfer of Members:

299 Any member in good standing who has fulfilled their obligations to the church, upon their  
300 request shall be granted a letter of transfer to unite with another Christ-centered, Bible-believing  
301 church as may be designated. A letter of transfer shall be sent to the church which the member  
302 intends to join.

303  
304 SECTION 6. Removals:

305 When any member moves to a distance inaccessible to their present church, they shall supply the  
306 clerk with their new address, and apply for a letter of transfer within one (1) year, provided there  
307 be a church of the same faith in the place to which they move. In case there is no such church, or  
308 there are circumstances which render it inadvisable to change, it shall be their duty to report to  
309 this church as often as once a year in person or by letter and contributions. All absent members  
310 who do not so report shall be liable to discipline by this church as provided by Article VIII,  
311 Section 1 of the By-Laws.

312  
313 SECTION 7. Voting Membership:

314 All eligible members age (12) years and older have a vote in all Church Family Meetings of this  
315 church.

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317  
318 **ARTICLE IV – ORGANIZATION**

319 SECTION 1. Congregational Authority:

320 The final authority and will of this church is placed in the membership of the church. Because of  
321 the “priesthood of all the believers” (I Peter 2:5), all Christians have the gift and discernment of  
322 the Holy Spirit and together form the body of Christ.

323  
324 The vote or consensus of the membership of this Church at a properly called meeting, as  
325 provided in the By-Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions:

- 326 a. Elect officers of the Church.  
327 b. Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from  
328 office.  
329 c. Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church  
330 when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, and approve any transactions  
331 regarding real property.  
332 d. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church  
333 by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion under Old Family Matters or under New  
334 Family Matters at a Church Family Meeting.  
335 e. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this church.  
336 f. Approve the call, job description, and compensation of ministerial and non-ministerial staff.

337  
338 SECTION 2. Elders:

339 The Elders are congregationally affirmed into their position by the church body. Subject to the  
340 will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In  
341 keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 and I Peter 5:1–4, the elders shall devote their  
342 time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and  
343 shepherding God’s flock. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment,  
344 supervision, and evaluation of staff members.

345  
346 SECTION 3. Deacons:  
347 The Deacons are congregationally affirmed members of the body who are responsible for the  
348 execution and oversight of various “spheres of ministry” in the church. In principle, the role of  
349 Deacons is drawn from the division of labor seen in Acts 6:2-4 where some in the church gave  
350 themselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer (Elders) and others gave themselves to other  
351 necessary ministries (Deacons). Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of the church.

352  
353 SECTION 4. Committees:  
354 Committees will be made up of affirmed members of the church body. Committees will be  
355 assigned certain areas of church ministry and responsibility to oversee. The chairperson of each  
356 committee will be a Deacon of the church (the Council of Elders is exempt from this  
357 requirement).

358  
359

360 **ARTICLE V – MEETINGS**

361 SECTION 1. Worship Meetings:  
362 Worship services shall be held each Lord’s Day, and may be held throughout the week for the  
363 edification of the body as the church determines.

364  
365 SECTION 2. Church Family Meetings:  
366 The church will hold a minimum of quarterly meetings to discuss church family matters. At the  
367 annual meeting the church will be presented annual reports from all officers, committees, and  
368 departments of the church. Election of officers and standing committees of the church will be  
369 conducted at the annual meeting. Special meetings may be called as needed.

370  
371

372 **ARTICLE VI – PROPERTY**

- 373 PROPERTY RIGHTS
- 374 a. This church shall have the power to buy, own, lease and sell property in its corporate name.
  - 375 b. This church shall not seek or knowingly accept any public monies or property as donations or  
376 compensation for ministerial services.
  - 377 c. The church corporation shall be sole owner of all property, personal or real, donated to or  
378 purchased by this church. No person shall retain any right, title, or interest in any such  
379 property.
  - 380 d. Conveyance or encumbrance of all or any church property may be made, provided, however,  
381 that any such action must receive at least a two-thirds majority vote of the membership of the  
382 church present at a meeting duly called pursuant to the By-Laws of this church. Instruments  
383 of conveyance or encumbrance so authorized at any such meeting shall be executed in the  
384 name of the church by the Trustees at large.
  - 385 e. No part of the income or assets of this church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable  
386 to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that this church shall be  
387 authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to

- 388 make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article I hereof.  
389 No substantial part of the activities of this church shall be the carrying on of political  
390 propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and this church shall not  
391 participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any  
392 political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other  
393 provision of this constitution, this church will not carry on any activities not permitted to be  
394 carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the  
395 Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future tax code, or (b) by a  
396 corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal  
397 Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future tax code.
- 398 f. Division: In the event of a division of the church membership, the church name and the real  
399 and personal property of the church shall belong to the body of members who adhere to the  
400 Constitution and By-Laws. Judgment of (a) the applicability of the Constitution and By-Laws  
401 to the issues causing the division, and (b) which faction adheres to the Constitution and By-  
402 Laws, shall be made by the officers of the Central Valley Baptist Association of the Southern  
403 Baptist Convention. In the event said officers conclude that (a) each or none of the factions  
404 adheres to the Constitution and By-Laws, or (b) the issues dividing the church are not  
405 governed by the Constitution or By-Laws, they shall award the church name and disburse the  
406 real and personal property of the church according to their sole discretion and judgment,  
407 provided such distribution shall be for exempt purposes within the meaning of section  
408 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax  
409 code.
- 410 g. Dissolution: In the event that the church dissolves as a Southern Baptist Church, all personal  
411 and real properties at the time of dissolution shall revert to the Central Valley Baptist  
412 Association (CVBA) for the specific purpose of replanting a Southern Baptist Church in  
413 Newman. In the event the CVBA is no longer in existence, then such assets shall revert to  
414 the California Southern Baptist Convention (CSBC) for the express purpose of such  
415 replanting.

## 416 **ARTICLE VII – MARRIAGE & SEXUALITY POLICY**

### 417 **SECTION 1. Marriage Defined:**

418 Marriage is ordained by God, and is an exclusive covenantal, physical and spiritual union of one  
419 man and one woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment. Jesus explained the original  
420 intention and core elements of marriage, and several New Testament Epistles give explicit  
421 instructions on this union. As such, the Church views marriage as a profound spiritual institution  
422 established by God and as addressed in our statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message  
423 (2000).

### 424 **SECTION 2 Clergy:**

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- 428 a. Only church-approved clergy shall officiate at marriage ceremonies conducted on church  
429 property. Clergy employed by the church shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and  
430 including dismissal for knowingly officiating at a marriage ceremony other than as defined  
431 in Section 1 of this Article and our statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message (2000).
- 432 b. The clergy assigned by the church to implement the procedures contained in this Marriage  
433 and Sexuality Policy may, in his or her sole discretion, decline to make church facilities  
434 available for, and/or decline to officiate at, a ceremony, when, in his judgment, there are  
435 significant concerns that one or both of the applicants may not be qualified to enter into the  
436 sacred bond of marriage for theological, doctrinal, moral or legal reasons.

437

438 SECTION 3: Applicants for Marriage:

- 439 a. Applicants wishing to have a ceremony performed by a member of the clergy employed by  
440 the church, or to use the church facilities, shall affirm that they agree to conduct themselves  
441 in a manner that is consistent with the Constitution and By-Laws.  
442 b. Applicants shall receive necessary premarital counseling by clergy or counselors employed  
443 by the church or other persons who, in the sole opinion of the pastoral staff of the church,  
444 have appropriate training, experience, and spiritual understanding to provide such  
445 counseling.

446  
447 SECTION 4: Church Premises:

- 448 a. Any marriage or funeral service performed on church premises shall be officiated by a  
449 member of the clergy.  
450 b. Clergy officiating marriage ceremonies or funeral service on church premises, whether or not  
451 employed by the church, shall affirm their agreement with the Constitution and By-Laws and  
452 shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.

453  
454 SECTION 5: Sexuality:

455 Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside  
456 of marriage including but not limited to, adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pedophilia  
457 are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the Church as are lascivious conduct,  
458 transgender behavior, and the creation, distribution, and/or viewing of pornography.

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460

461 **ARTICLE VIII – BY-LAWS**

462 SECTION 1. Supplement to Constitution:

463 A supplement to this Constitution known as the By-Laws shall include, but not necessarily be  
464 limited to:

- 465 a. Procedures for admittance to membership;  
466 b. The definitions, qualifications, duties, and procedures for the calling and termination of  
467 pastoral staff, elders, deacons, officers, and committees;  
468 c. Procedures for establishing the definitions of the working relationship between the church  
469 and any of its ministries;  
470 d. Provision and procedures for meetings other than those mandated by the Constitution.

471

472

473 SECTION 2. By-Law Amendments & Changes:

474 Proposed changes to the By-Laws shall be presented in writing to the Council of Elders for  
475 presentation at any Church Family Meeting. The addition, alteration, or amendment must be  
476 drawn up in writing and handed out to the membership for the purpose of reading and  
477 considering two (2) weeks prior to the Church Family Meeting at which it is read and voted  
478 upon. When approved at the Church Family Meeting with two thirds approval of the votes cast it  
479 will be made part of the By-Laws.

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**ARTICLE IX – CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

483 Amendments to this constitution may be made at Church Family Meetings or specially called  
484 meetings of the church when approved by three quarters of the votes cast. The proposed  
485 amendment must be presented to the congregation in writing at least two months prior to its  
486 adoption to ensure adequate time for its scrutiny and discussion.

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# **THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH of NEWMAN’S BY-LAWS**

## **ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1. Admission, Transfer, and Dismissal:**

A person is admitted, transferred, resigned, or dismissed according to the definition of a member found in the constitution Article III.

### **SECTION 2. General Procedure:**

- a. Persons desiring church membership should make their request known to a member of the Council of Elders or a pastor. Such persons will be given a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws, Statement of Faith, and the Church Covenant. Upon reading over these documents and agreeing to and signing the Church Covenant they will contact an Elder or the church office to schedule a meeting for discussion.
- b. Two or more Elders will speak with the membership candidate. During this conversation the candidate will share their testimony and their desires for membership.
- c. When the Council of Elders is confident of the applicant's faith in Christ, assurance of salvation, desire to live the Christian life, and willingness to participate in the fellowship and discipline of the local church, then for three consecutive weeks the Council of Elders shall announce (placed in bulletins) that such persons have requested membership.
- d. Any objections to an applicant's membership must be submitted in writing to the Council of Elders within the three-week announcement period. Objections are not to be discussed with anyone except the Council of Elders and must include:
  - i. The reason for the objection,
  - ii. Scriptural basis for the objection, and
  - iii. Evidence that indicates the applicant participates in activities or holds to ideas that are objectionable.
- e. If investigation by the Council of Elders substantiates any objection submitted according to the above and the applicant will not repent of the wrong, they shall be denied membership.
- f. Announcement of new members will be made to the congregation after the close of the three-week announcement period. Those who are admitted as members in the local church will be formally presented to the congregation and given the right hand of fellowship.
- g. Pastors and their wives automatically become members with full voting privileges on receipt and acceptance of a call from the church. Staff members and their spouses, if the hiring process included comparable examination of both spouses; likewise become members at the point of hire.

### **SECTION 3. Termination of Membership:**

The church shall recognize the termination of a person’s membership following his or her death, and may do so after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the Council of Elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

- a. The church shall have authority to refuse a member’s voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church for the purpose of proceeding with the process of church discipline.

536 b. When a member has been inactive for a period of one year without manifesting interest in the  
537 church as an active participant, every effort will be made to enlist the cooperation of the  
538 member in question. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the person will be notified in writing at  
539 least 30 days prior to removal. The Council of Elders will inform the clerk to place the name  
540 of the member in question on the next Family Meeting agenda for the congregation to vote  
541 on the removal from membership.  
542

543 SECTION 4. Membership Roll:

544 A current record will be maintained under the supervision of the church Clerk. This will be done  
545 to define who has voting rights and to maintain communication with the congregation.  
546

547

548

**ARTICLE II – ELDERS**

549 SECTION 1. Definition and Qualifications:

550 Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the  
551 church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 and I Peter 5:1–4, the elders shall  
552 devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound  
553 doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.  
554

555 Each year the Elders will assist the Finance Committee to develop an itemized budget to be  
556 presented to the church.  
557

558 Each year the Elders will work with the Deacons to submit a list of candidates who are church  
559 members to fill committee vacancies, other church offices, and positions (See By-Law Articles V  
560 and VI for reference).  
561

562 All elders will serve on a single Council of Elders. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may  
563 be specialized in function. A majority of the active eldership shall be composed of church  
564 members not in the regular pay of the church. The selection of officers and assignment of  
565 responsibilities within the Council of Elders will be determined by internal election. The Council  
566 may establish and shall oversee other church committees and task forces as necessary.  
567

568 An Elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at Church Family Meetings.  
569

570 The qualifications for the office of elder are set forth in I Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9.

571 “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a  
572 noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one  
573 wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a  
574 drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must  
575 manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive,  
576 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he  
577 care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed  
578 up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be  
579 well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of  
580 the devil.” (I Timothy 3:1-7)

581 “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order,  
582 and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—if anyone is above reproach,  
583 the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge  
584 of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be  
585 above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or

586 violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright,  
587 holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that  
588 he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who  
589 contradict it.” (Titus 1:5-9)

590 In addition, he shall accept and live in accordance with the statement of faith, the church  
591 covenant and the Church’s constitution and By-Laws.

592

593 SECTION 2. Selection of Elders:

594 a. The Elder Council will issue a written invitation to the members of the congregation, asking  
595 them to submit the names of men whom they believe qualify to serve as Elders. This  
596 submission of potential candidates for Elder will be done in writing and the Council of Elders  
597 will evaluate all potential candidates.

598 b. Those initially thought to be qualified to serve will be made available to the congregation for  
599 interview. A mechanism to express concerns in writing regarding any candidate, to the  
600 Council of Elders, will be provided.

601 c. Upon the investigation and resolution of any submitted concerns, the Council of Elders will  
602 submit the names of all candidates for the Council of Elders to the congregation, in writing,  
603 two weeks prior to the election. Affirmation of each Elder candidate will be held at the  
604 annual Church Family meeting. The church will affirm each Elder candidate by secret ballot  
605 on the basis of a three-quarter majority of those present.

606 d. Elders will be affirmed to a three-year term. A Council member may not serve in excess of  
607 two consecutive terms. Following two consecutive terms the Elder will not serve actively in  
608 office for a period of one year. Following this period they are again eligible for nomination  
609 as Elder.

610 e. Departing members of the Elder Council will continue to serve as non-governing Elders of  
611 the church to the extent that they are willing and able to serve in that capacity.

612 f. When the number of Council members becomes less than that considered to be essential, the  
613 Elder Council may appoint members from among the most recent congregational elder  
614 nomination list. Elder Council appointments must be confirmed by congregational vote at the  
615 next Family Meeting or specially called meeting.

616

617 SECTION 3. Meetings:

618 The Council of Elders shall meet for the consideration of church and ministry needs and for the  
619 prayer of the church body not less than once per month. The Elders may call additional meetings  
620 as needed. A quorum of a simple majority is necessary to conduct meetings. Meetings of the  
621 Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication  
622 through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other.

623

624 SECTION 4. Accountability:

625 a. All Elders will participate faithfully in mutual discipleship ministry with the Senior Pastor.

626 b. The Council of Elders shall evaluate itself and its members to assure that it is fulfilling its  
627 responsibilities in accordance with the word of God, the church covenant, Constitution and  
628 By-Laws.

629 c. The Council of Elders shall be responsible for disciplining its members, if the occasion  
630 arises, in accordance with the principles established in Article II of these By-Laws.

631 d. The Council of Elders shall be accountable to the congregation and ultimately to the Head of  
632 the Church, Jesus Christ, for all their actions and decisions (Ephesians 1:22-23, Hebrews  
633 13:17, I Peter 5:1-4).

634

635 SECTION 5. Resignation:

636 Any Elder who ceases to fulfill the biblical qualifications for an Elder, is unable to fulfill the  
637 duties of his office, fails to attend three consecutive Council of Elder meetings without good  
638 reason, or does not regularly attend the announced services of the church, shall be asked to resign  
639 from the Council of Elders.

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641

### 642 **ARTICLE III – PASTORAL STAFF**

#### 643 *SECTION 1. Qualifications:*

644 Each member shall have been called by the will of God into the ministry of serving God,  
645 proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, and edifying the people of God. Each shall be a mature,  
646 godly person of outstanding character whose reputation is beyond reproach. He must display the  
647 spiritual and personal qualities required of leaders by the Bible (I Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9). The  
648 pastor shall be an ordained minister of the Southern Baptist Convention, or be willing to become  
649 one in a timely manner upon appointment. In addition, he shall accept and live in accordance  
650 with the Statement of Faith, Church Covenant, Constitution, and By-Laws of this church.

651

#### 652 *SECTION 2. Selection:*

653 When the need for Pastoral Staff arises, the Elder Council shall evaluate the needs of the church  
654 and present a recommendation to the congregation, which identifies the nature of the staff  
655 position to be filled. Upon receiving congregational approval of this recommendation by secret  
656 ballot, the Elder Council will proceed to name a search committee.

657

#### 658 a. Search Committees

659 i. The Search Committee for Senior Pastor shall consist of regular members who are  
660 mature, discerning believers, representing as broad a spectrum as possible within  
661 the church body. At least one member of the Council of Elders will be part of this  
662 committee.

663 ii. The Search Committee for an Associate Pastor shall consist of mature, discerning  
664 believers, representing as broad a spectrum as possible within the church body.  
665 Some members of this committee will be closely connected to the Associate  
666 Pastor's sphere of ministry. At least one member of the Council of Elders will be  
667 part of this committee.

668 iii. The Senior Pastor will be a member of all Search Committees.

669 iv. An outgoing pastor may not be a member of the Search Committee seeking his  
670 replacement, but may be a consultant to it if requested to consult by the Search  
671 Committee.

672 b. All Search Committees will consult with the Elder Council and solicit recommendations  
673 from other members of the congregation to establish a prioritized list of qualifications to seek  
674 in selecting a candidate to fill the specific position under consideration.

675 c. The Search Committee shall solicit names of candidates from the Pastoral Staff, the SBC  
676 national, state, and association staff, the congregation, and other sources.

677 d. The Search Committee shall be responsible for investigating the background and  
678 qualifications of those it is considering.

679 e. Those candidates who meet the criteria established by these By-Laws and by the Search  
680 Committee shall be placed on a list from which one candidate will be selected by the Search  
681 Committee and invited for more thorough interviews and evaluation.

682 f. After being selected by the Search Committee and approved by no less than a three-quarters  
683 majority vote, the candidate shall then be presented to the Elder Council for their approval.  
684 The Elder Council must approve the candidate before the person may be presented to the  
685 congregation for affirmation.

- 686 g. The approved candidate must be presented to the congregation by means of written materials  
687 for no less than two weeks previous to a personal visit by the candidate and family.  
688 Congregational evaluation shall include opportunities for personal contact, preaching, or  
689 other activities, as appropriate for the position being filled.
- 690 h. Congregational approval shall be demonstrated by an 85% approval vote of qualified voting  
691 members present. The votes shall be cast by secret ballot.
- 692 i. All Pastoral Staff members shall be called for an indefinite term of service and shall, together  
693 with their spouses, automatically become regular members of the church, upon acceptance of  
694 a Pastoral Staff position.

695

696 SECTION 3. Resignation:

697 Pastoral staff members shall be allowed to resign any time they feel the Holy Spirit is leading  
698 them to do so. Resignation should be given in writing to the Council of Elders. Resignation  
699 normally becomes effective thirty (30) days after the Elders accept it.

700

701 SECTION 4. Dismissal:

- 702 a. Accusations against pastoral staff that could be grounds for dismissal should be affirmed by  
703 two or three witnesses and brought to the attention of the Elder Council. This is in  
704 accordance with I Timothy 5:19-20, "Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the  
705 evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the  
706 presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear."
- 707 b. A recommendation for dismissal can be made by the Elder Council only when the  
708 requirements established under Article III, Section I of the By-Laws and the job description  
709 are unfulfilled or when protracted efforts at resolving a policy dispute between the Council of  
710 Elders and a member of the pastoral staff has demonstrated an irreconcilable dispute between  
711 them as to church policy.
- 712 c. The recommendation for dismissal from the Elder Council shall be presented to the  
713 congregation for its consideration. This recommendation for dismissal must be announced  
714 two weeks prior to a Church Family Meeting or a Specially called meeting and be confirmed  
715 by three-quarters majority vote of the qualified members of the congregation present, cast by  
716 secret ballot, when the Pastoral Staff member is not present. The dismissal of Pastoral staff  
717 requires a quorum of 40 to be present at the meeting.
- 718 d. At any time during the proceedings, the member of the Pastoral Staff may submit his  
719 resignation to the Council of Elders, which would eliminate the need for additional public  
720 discussion or congregational vote.
- 721 e. In the case of serious disciplinary problems, the Council of Elders shall be empowered to  
722 relieve the staff member of his duties until the dismissal process is completed.

723

724 SECTION 5. Senior Pastor:

- 725 a. He shall be responsible for his area of ministry as defined by the Council of Elders and  
726 approved by the congregation. These duties will include: conduct the public services of  
727 worship, administer the ordinances of the church and care for the spiritual needs of the  
728 church body.
- 729 b. He shall be responsible for coordinating the ministries of the pastoral staff.
- 730 c. He shall be a member of the Council of Elders and an ex-officio member of all other  
731 Councils, committees, taskforces and organizations. He may delegate his ex-officio status to  
732 another member of the pastoral staff or Council of Elders for participation in any meeting.

733

734 SECTION 6. Associate Pastor(s):

- 735 a. An Associate Pastor shall be responsible for his area of ministry as defined by the Elder  
 736 Council and approved by the congregation. Associate Pastors may be responsible for  
 737 specialized areas such as: ministries in teaching, education, music and worship, church  
 738 administration, or other needed areas.
- 739 b. An Associate Pastor shall perform such other duties in connection with the work of the  
 740 church as requested by the Senior Pastor and approved by the Council of Elders.
- 741 c. An Associate Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all Councils and committees related to  
 742 his assigned areas of ministry as determined by the Elder Council.
- 743 d. An Associate Pastor shall perform the Senior Pastor's duties when he is unable, is absent, or  
 744 as requested by the Council of Elders or Senior Pastor.
- 745 e. Associate Pastors shall be Elders of the church. However, the number of pastoral staff on the  
 746 Council must comply with the Church By-Law Article II, Section 1.
- 747  
 748

## ARTICLE IV – DEACONS

### SECTION 1. Qualifications:

751 A Deacon shall be a regular member of the church, who accepts and lives in accordance with  
 752 biblical principles (I Timothy 3:8-13), the Statement of Faith, Constitution, By-Laws of this  
 753 church and is covenant. It is our understanding of this passage that qualified women may serve  
 754 as Deacons.

755 “Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much  
 756 wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with  
 757 a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as  
 758 deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be  
 759 dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons  
 760 each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own  
 761 households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for  
 762 themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.” (I  
 763 Timothy 3:8-13)

764

### SECTION 2. Selection:

- 766 a. When the need arises, the Council of Elders will invite the congregation to submit the names  
 767 of those whom they believe would meet the qualifications for Deacon and would be capable  
 768 of serving. The Council of Elders will review all candidates and submit the names of those  
 769 qualified to the congregation for approval.
- 770 b. Deacons shall be elected to three-year term. They may only be elected to another term after a  
 771 one-year absence.
- 772 c. Regular election of Deacons will be held at the Annual Church Family Meeting. Affirmation  
 773 will be by secret ballot on the basis of simple majority of those present.
- 774 d. If an urgent need for a Deacon arises, the Elder Council may appoint a qualified individual as  
 775 an “Acting Deacon” pending congregational approval at the next Church Family meeting or  
 776 specially called meeting.
- 777

### SECTION 3. Responsibilities:

779 The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and  
 780 promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the  
 781 members of the congregation.

782

### SECTION 3.1 Spheres Of Ministry:

784 There are times when certain areas of ministry or responsibility require oversight, but not a full  
785 elected committee. In these cases the Council of Elders with the approval of the church  
786 membership may establish a position, to be filled by a deacon. These positions may require  
787 others to assist or aid in their performance, but do not require one to be elected into a position  
788 (i.e. Greeters, A.V. Booth, Worship Team). If need be, the deacon would use their discretion in  
789 enlisting volunteers. The process of filling the deacon position will follow Article IV, Section 2  
790 of the By-Laws.

791  
792 SECTION 4. Accountability:  
793 Each Deacon shall be accountable to the Elder Council and ultimately to the congregation. Every  
794 effort should be made between Deacons and their respective area of oversight to cooperate in the  
795 mission of the church. But in the event of disagreement, the Elder Council shall be consulted for  
796 assistance in resolution.

797  
798

## 799 **ARTICLE V – OTHER CHURCH OFFICES AND POSITIONS**

800 SECTION 1. Clerk:  
801 The Clerk shall keep accurately the record of all Church Family Meetings, which shall be  
802 approved at each regular meeting. The Clerk shall create in conjunction with the Senior Pastor  
803 and the Elder Moderator the agenda for all Family Meetings, and both post and distribute by  
804 email to church members the final agenda a minimum of 72 hours prior to each Family Meeting.  
805 The Clerk shall preserve, in a safe place, all church documents and shall keep a correct register  
806 of the membership, with date and manner of admission, transfer, and dismissal. He/she shall  
807 inform all members of their election or appointment to an office or committee. At the annual  
808 meeting of the church, he/she shall submit an annual statistical report of the work of the church.  
809 The Clerk shall serve a three-year term. The Clerk may serve consecutive terms.

810  
811 SECTION 2. Treasurer:  
812 a. The Treasurer, who shall not be an active elder or paid church staff member, shall ensure that  
813 all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial  
814 institutions, or depositories as appropriate.  
815 b. The church shall use a budget, and the treasurer shall disburse all funds for local expenses.  
816 The Treasurer shall be entrusted with all moneys belonging to this church, and shall without  
817 special vote or authority pay out of the church funds for all budgeted items. He/she shall pay  
818 all non-budgeted items only after they have been approved by the church. He/she may pay  
819 emergency expenses belonging to the church upon authorization by the finance committee.  
820 c. He/she shall keep records of all receipts and disbursements, with proper vouchers.  
821 d. He/she shall present a summary of the financial condition of the church at each Church  
822 Family Meeting and present a financial report, which shall be approved by the church. Also,  
823 there shall be a complete report submitted at the annual meeting. He/she shall be elected to a  
824 three-year term. The Treasurer may serve consecutive terms.

825  
826 SECTION 2.1. Assistant Treasurer:  
827 In cases of emergencies, illness, or absences, the Assistant Treasurer shall assume all of the  
828 duties described in Section 2. The Assistant Treasurer shall serve a three-year term. The  
829 Assistant Treasurer may not serve consecutive terms.

830  
831 SECTION 3. Financial Secretary:  
832 He/she is accountable to the Congregation and the Finance Committee to record funds that come  
833 into the church treasury. He/she will maintain confidentiality concerning all church giving

834 records. At year-end he/she will provide annual giving reports to each giver for their records and  
835 tax purposes. The Financial Secretary shall serve a three-year term and may not serve  
836 consecutive terms.

837  
838 SECTION 4. Trustees:

839 The trustees shall be composed of at least three members, elected under the rotating system.  
840 Each new trustee shall be elected for a term of three years. All actions of the trustees shall be  
841 subject to the approval of the church. Their authority and methods of conducting business shall  
842 be in accord with the provisions of statutes of the State of California. This Board of Trustees  
843 shall be custodian of all properties whether real or personal, shall transact all business of the  
844 church under the direction of the membership of the church, and shall perform all other duties  
845 imposed upon them by the laws of the State of California. In no case shall the Board be  
846 authorized to make expenditures or create indebtedness without the authorization of the church  
847 in a family meeting. The trustees of this church shall attest all contracts, obligations, mortgages,  
848 deeds of trust, notes, deeds, indentures, and all legal documents of this church organization.

849  
850 SECTION 5. Church Messengers:

851 Once (1) a year messengers shall be elected to represent this church in the Central Valley Baptist  
852 Association, the California Southern Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. It  
853 shall be their duty, as we cooperate with other churches in advancing the Kingdom of Christ, to  
854 furnish the association and conventions a statement of the condition of the church, if challenged.

855  
856 SECTION 6. Non-Pastoral Staff:

857 Any paid non-pastoral staff position and job description must be confirmed by congregational  
858 vote. The congregation will also affirm the salary/hourly wage for the position. The Council of  
859 Elders (or an appointee(s) of the Elder Council) will then seek to fill the position. Non-pastoral  
860 staff will be or become church members.

861  
862

863 **ARTICLE VI – CHURCH COMMITTEES**

864 SECTION 1. Definition:

865 A standing committee is a committee that has been approved by the church and is listed as a  
866 committee in By-Law Article VI.

867  
868 SECTION 2. Finance Committee:

869 The Finance Committee shall be comprised of six members. The first three members will be the  
870 Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and the Financial Secretary. The remaining members will be  
871 nominated by the Elder Council and affirmed by congregational vote. This committee will  
872 formulate an annual budget to be presented to the church, to be voted on at the Annual Church  
873 Family Meeting. They will work to oversee the budget and aid the church in understanding its  
874 responsibilities as the Lord's stewards.

875  
876 SECTION 3. Counting Committee:

877 This committee shall consist of at least three members. Any alternates to fill in absences must be  
878 affirmed by the church. They will count weekly the collected tithes and offerings and deposit the  
879 amount into the church's bank account weekly.

880  
881 SECTION 3.1. Conflict of Interest:

882 Neither the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, nor Financial Secretary shall participate in the  
883 counting of tithes and offerings, nor shall any member of their immediate family.

884

885 SECTION 4. Building & Grounds Committee:

886 This committee will oversee and care for the facilities, properties, and grounds of the church.

887

888 SECTION 5. Mission Committee:

889 This committee will aid the church in fulfilling the Great Commission locally, nationally and  
890 internationally.

891

892 SECTION 6. Establishing Committees:

893 Other committees may be established, as they are deemed necessary at a regular church family  
894 meeting or presented to the congregation by the Council of Elders for approval. Responsibilities  
895 of committees will be outlined in writing and revised as needed. Committees may also be  
896 dissolved when their task is accomplished or they become no longer relevant to the mission and  
897 ministry of the church. At any regular Church Family Meeting the church may select, or elect the  
898 Pastor to select, special committees to investigate or carry out the wishes of the church. If the  
899 church membership should see the need for a new standing committee, said committee will be  
900 added to the church By-Laws Article VI.

901

902 SECTION 7. Responsibilities:

- 903 1. Each committee shall seek the Lord's leading in carrying out its duties in its area of oversight  
904 for the edification of the church and the glory of God.
- 905 2. Each committee may establish its own guidelines, which shall be subject to the approval of  
906 the Council of Elders.

907

908 SECTION 8. Vacancy of Office:

909 When any officer of this church or member of a committee, on moving his/her place of residence  
910 from this vicinity, being absent for three successive months without a reason satisfactory to the  
911 officers or committee, or resigning their post then their position shall thereby be automatically  
912 vacated. In any such case, a successor may be elected at any Church Family Meeting to serve out  
913 this unexpired term of office. If a vacancy arises which hinders the committee's responsibility to  
914 fulfill their obligation, the Elder Council may appoint a member from among the most recent  
915 congregational nomination list. The Elder Council appointment must be confirmed by  
916 congregational vote at the next Church Family Meeting.

917

918 SECTION 9. Rotation In Office-holding:

919 Standing committee members shall be elected on a three-year rotating basis. The first one elected  
920 shall be the first one to rotate off, and so on.

921

922 SECTION 10. Pastor & Elders As Ex-Officio:

923 The Pastor shall be ex-officio member of the committees. He may delegate his ex-officio status  
924 to another member of the pastoral staff or Council of Elders for participation in any meeting.

925

926 SECTION 11. Consensus:

927 Consensus aims for complete agreement and support among those who are part of a committee.  
928 This is complete consensus. However, committees should be willing to move ahead with a  
929 decision where there is clear support among the majority of members, when not more than two  
930 members oppose the decision and the dissenters do not feel it is a critical issue where they are  
931 totally and absolutely opposed (i.e. where they are willing, despite their dissent, to "stand  
932 aside"). This latter is "sufficient consensus" or "qualified consensus". Giving consent does not  
933 necessarily mean that the proposal being considered is one's first choice. Group members can

934 vote their consent to a proposal because they choose to cooperate with the direction of the group,  
935 rather than insist on their personal preference. If a consensus cannot be reached and the  
936 committee wishes to continue forward a supermajority of 75% must be reached.

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## 939 **ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS**

### 940 SECTION 1. The Lord's Day:

941 The Church shall meet regularly on each Lord's Day for public worship. Under normal  
942 conditions the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once (1) a quarter. The Pastor shall direct  
943 the church in this meaningful ordinance more often if he sees the spiritual wisdom to do so.

944

### 945 SECTION 2. Mid-week Gatherings:

946 It is the desire of this church to meet at least once (1) a week for prayer and Bible study.

947

### 948 SECTION 3. Church Family Meetings:

949 At the Annual Church Family Meeting written reports from all the officers, departments, and  
950 committees will be presented. The election of the officers and members to standing committees  
951 will also occur at the Annual Meeting of the church. The transaction of other agenda pertaining  
952 to the church and its mission will take place at Church Family Meetings. These meetings shall  
953 include reports from such committees and individuals as deemed necessary and desirable by the  
954 Council of Elders. The Annual Meeting shall occur during the month of October. Quarterly  
955 meetings shall occur in the months of January, April and July.

956

### 957 SECTION 4. Special Called Church Family Meetings:

958 Special Called Meetings shall be called by the Council of Elders or any ten members in good  
959 standing. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit at two successive Sunday  
960 mornings prior to the meeting. The particular object(s) of such meeting will be clearly stated in  
961 the notice. Special called meetings are any meetings that do not occur on the dates of regularly  
962 scheduled Church Family Meetings.

963

### 964 SECTION 5. Quorum:

965 In all regular Church Family Meetings twenty (20) shall constitute a quorum. In any Family  
966 Meeting addressing the calling of a Pastor, sale of property, assumption of major financial  
967 responsibilities, and amending the Constitution or church By-Laws, forty (40) members shall be  
968 required for a quorum.

969

### 970 SECTION 6. Manner of Conducting Church Family Meetings:

971 The Word of God, the Bible, will be the supreme rule of order within the church. Members shall  
972 act in the spirit of mutual trust, openness and loving consideration as is appropriate for those who  
973 are members of the body of Christ Jesus. The church shall use Roberts Rules of Order as the  
974 suggested guide in governing the procedures of the affairs of this church during any Church  
975 Family Meeting.

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### 977 SECTION 7. Regarding the Will of the Church:

978 The Will of the Church, on any given matter and duly expressed by its vote, shall be carried out  
979 by all committees, officers, and organizations of the church.

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## ARTICLE VIII - DISCIPLINE

### SECTION 1. Causes For Discipline:

1. The primary biblical cause for disciplinary action is a member being in persistent unrepentant sin. God's people are to be characterized by holiness, as that standard is defined in His Word. Refusal to conform to God's standard is a serious offense against God and must be dealt with by His people (1 Cor. 5:2; 2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Tim. 5:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).
2. Any activity which is harmful to the church is also a biblical reason for discipline. The following causes are specifically defined:
  - a. Teaching doctrine which contradict biblical truth (1 Tim. 1:3, 20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18).
  - b. Provoking divisions and quarrels within the church (Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10-11).
3. When a member of the church needs discipline for one of the causes mentioned above, it is the responsibility of the other members of the body to seek his/her restoration. Disciplinary action is not meant as a means to accuse or condemn another, but rather to bring about mutual restoration according to the process defined in Matthew 18:15-20.
4. No call for disciplinary action shall be considered against an elder or pastor of the church unless supported by at least two witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19).

### SECTION 2. Procedure For Restoration:

1. Go to the offender in private and talk to him/her about the offense. If he/she listens and corrects the offense, it is to be carried no further (Matt. 18:15).
2. If the offender refuses to correct the offense, take one or two mature believers along to talk with the person. They are witnesses to the process and may recommend corrective action to either the accused or the accuser. If the offender listens and corrects the offense, no further action should be taken (Matt. 18:16).
3. If the offender still refuses to correct the offense, go to the church leadership (Matt. 18:17), which is the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders shall constitute a committee for discipline. They shall seek to interview the offender with the purpose of leading the offender to Scriptural truth so that the offender will correct his/her offense and to restore him/her to fellowship with the Lord and with his/her brothers and sisters in Christ. If the offender is an Elder or Pastor, the rest of the Elder Council shall constitute a committee for discipline.
4. If the offender still refuses to correct the offense, the Elders shall:
  - a. Take appropriate action to restore the offender.
  - b. As a final recourse, upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders, and by vote of the church, a member guilty of conduct unbecoming to his/her profession of faith and who makes no evidence of confession may be excluded from participation in the activities of the church (Matt. 18:17-20). This offender will be removed from membership and will not have voting rights and may not hold any ministry position, elected or appointed.

Apart from continued efforts to bring about restoration, church members are to avoid fellowship with the offender after such action is taken (Matt. 18:17; 2 Thess. 3:6; Heb. 12:14-16; I Cor. 5:11-13).

1030 Whenever such action is deemed necessary, it is understood that the offender has  
1031 been removed from membership because of failure to submit to the standards of  
1032 God's word and to the authority of church leadership as defined in the church  
1033 Constitution and By-Laws.

1034 5. Since disciplinary action is for the correction and reconciliation of the offender,  
1035 restoration is to be granted as quickly as possible. Upon evidence of the repentance of the  
1036 offender, the Elder Council will seek to interview the offender. As soon as the Elders are  
1037 convinced that repentance has occurred, they will restore the person to full membership  
1038 and announce the decision to the congregation. Forgiveness and restoration to fellowship  
1039 with the church body is to be granted with appropriate rejoicing (Matt. 18:21-22; Luke  
1040 15:21-32; II Cor. 2:5-11)

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1042 **ARTICLE IX – GENERAL INFORMATION**

1043 *SECTION 1. Church Financial Review:*

1044 This church will have a review of our financials once every three years by an outside reviewer.

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1046 *SECTION 2. Dispute Resolution:*

1047 We believe that the Scriptures call Christians to put forth every effort to live at peace with each  
1048 other and the world. The Bible calls us to resolve disputes and conflict with each other in private  
1049 or within the church (Matthew 18:15-20, I Corinthians 6:7-8). We desire all our members to  
1050 resolve conflict among our brothers and sisters according to biblical principles without the  
1051 reliance on secular courts. The church has a responsibility to be a peacemaker and shall  
1052 encourage the use of biblical based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside  
1053 of the church (whether Christian or worldly and whether individuals or corporate entities).