

Bylaws of East Side Baptist Church Fort Smith, Arkansas

ARTICLE 1. Church Membership

Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right to self-government in all phases of the life of this church. The membership reserved the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

- By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church
- By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church of like faith and order.
- Upon statement of a previous profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and subsequent scriptural baptism by immersion according to the New Testament as stated in Article VII of The Baptist Faith and Message, (1998).

Any candidate not receiving a unanimous vote shall be referred to the deacon body for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church. A two-thirds vote of the church members present and voting shall be required to elect investigated candidates to membership.

Section 3. Rights of Members

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church members' meeting, provided the member is present. Every member of the church is eligible for consideration as a candidate for those positions recommended by the Nominating Committee. Every member of the church may participate in the Lord's Supper as administrated by the church.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) death of the member, (2) transfer of letter, (3) withdrawal of fellowship by action of this church, (4) written request of said member, (5) joining a church of another denomination. All membership terminations shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the church in a regular members' meeting.

Section 5. Discipline

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, ministerial staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members towards one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment. Should some serious condition exist as a result of a member's wickedness, or scandalous conduct that discredits and brings disgrace upon the church, the pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to

withdraw fellowship from a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. A spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance shall pervade all such proceedings. The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by a two-thirds vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

ARTICLE II. Mission and Ministries

Section 1. General

The mission of East Side Baptist church is given by the Lord Jesus in the Great Command (Matthew 22:37-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20): We will love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; love our neighbors as ourselves; and go to make disciples.

The mission will be advanced through five essential New Testament Ministries:

- Worship Ministries will lead the church to grow in our love for the Lord through corporate worship, personal devotion, prayer, music, choirs, drama, and audio-visual resources.
- Pastoral Ministries will lead the church to grow in our love for our neighbors through caring ministries that meet the needs of members and the community.
- Fellowship Ministries will lead the church to grow in our love for one another through small groups and church activities, which incorporate new members into the body of Christ.
- Mission & Evangelism Ministries will lead the church to do our part in fulfilling the Great Commission through local, national, and international outreach with the support of Women on Mission and Brotherhood.
- Discipleship Ministries will lead the church to do our part in fulfilling the Great Commission by discipling new members, maintaining a Bible teaching program (Sunday School), and providing ongoing discipleship and leadership training (Discipleship Training).

Section 2. Organization

It is the task of the staff, deacons, and other leadership of the church to equip and resource the members to form ministry teams and support groups, begin and maintain programs, and plan and conduct events that will enable the church to advance our five essential ministries (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Article III. Officers

Section 1. General

Job descriptions for Church Officers will be found in the Church Operations Manual.

Section 2. Pastor

The pastor is the worship leader of the church. Responsible for guiding the church to function as a New Testament church, the pastor will oversee the congregation, organizations, and church

staff as they perform their tasks. He shall preside at meetings of this church, described in Article VI of the Bylaws, and serve as an ex-officio member of all committees. The pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, he works with the deacons and church staff to: (1) lead the church in the achievement of its purpose and objectives, (2) proclaim the gospel to believers, and (3) care of the church's members and other persons in the community.

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a special members' meeting called for that purpose of which at least one week's written notice has been given to all resident members. The vote call will be taken, after a forum, immediately following the Sunday morning worship service at which the candidate preaches. The Pastor Search Committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present being necessary for a call. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church at the time of resignation.

The church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a special members' meeting called for that purpose, of which at least a one-week written notice has been given to all resident members. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the personnel committee and the active deacons or by written petition signed by not less than one fourth of the resident church members. The members present shall designate the moderator for this meeting by majority vote and he shall be someone other than the pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by written ballot, an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting being necessary to declare the office vacant. The termination shall be immediate. Except in the case of gross misconduct by the pastor causing exclusion from office, the church will compensate the pastor in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in the personnel policy and procedure manual.

Immediately upon the resignation, death, or removal of the pastor, an Interim Pastorate committee shall be elected to arrange for pulpit supply during the interim period to seek and recommend to the church an interim pastor; assist personnel and finance committees in financial plans for the interim pastor; and encourage all organizations of the church to maintain a positive growth-oriented program during the interim period. The church shall choose an interim pastor in the same manner as required for calling a pastor.

Section 3. Ministerial Staff

The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Those staff members of whom the church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and called by two-thirds vote of the church. At the time of resignation, at least two weeks' notice shall be given to the church. The terms of continued employment and compensation are subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the personnel policy and procedure manual.

Section 4. Support Staff

Support staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for the services. The church personnel committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of support staff members. The committee may delegate the aforementioned authority. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the church.

Section 5. Deacons

- Purpose – the office of deacon shall be held by men ordained by a Southern Baptist church and duly elected by the membership of East Side Baptist Church and shall faithfully discharge their responsibilities as servants to the church body. Each deacon agrees to hold himself accountable to the deacon body in matters of character, conduct and participation in ministry.
- Nominations and Qualifications – Prospective deacons shall be nominated to serve or to be ordained by the deacon body at any regular monthly or specially called deacons' meeting. Prospective deacon candidates may also be presented by any member of the church to the deacon body for consideration. Nominations from the deacon body shall be voted on and approved by the church at a regular or special called member's meeting. Deacons shall be chosen from the male members of the church body and the individual chosen shall have been a born-again Christian for a period of not less than two (2) years, a member in good standing of East Side Baptist Church for a period of not less than one (1) year and have proven his spiritual maturity in his home and church life prior to being nominated to be ordained or to serve in the office. Each individual chosen shall have been found to meet the qualifications set forth in the New Testament in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 and Acts 6:2-3.
- Service – Each deacon shall serve on a Deacon Ministry Team led by one of the church staff members. Deacons agreeing and chosen to serve shall serve a term of undetermined time, but if at any time a deacon shall find it necessary to not serve for a period of time, he shall meet with the pastor to determine the appropriate time needed to be inactive in his service. The active deacons and the pastor shall determine the number of deacons necessary to carry out the duties of the various ministry teams.

Section 6. Clerk

The clerk shall be elected annually and may be re-elected, by the church. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk shall preside at the election of an acting moderator, when necessary. With regard to legal matters the clerk shall serve as the registered agent for service of process.

Section 7. Treasurer

The treasurer shall be elected annually, and may be re-elected by the church as its financial officer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular members' meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by a certified public accountant. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as part of the permanent records of the church.

Section 8. Trustees

The church shall elect three trustees and two alternates to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property.

When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage purchase or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters. Trustees shall serve three-year terms on a rotation basis, with one new trustee being elected every year. After serving a term of three years, a trustee shall be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of at least one year.

ARTICLE V. Committees

Section 1. General

The standing committees of this church shall be a nominating committee, personnel committee, finance committee and missions committee. Other special committees of the church may be elected as needed.

Section 2. Selection/Election

All standing and any special church committee members shall be recommended to the church by the nominating committee, and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these bylaws. Committee members of standing committees shall be elected to serve three-year rotating terms and may not be re-elected to serve on the same committee until the lapse of one year. No member may serve on more than one standing committee at a time. All special committees will be elected to serve for a specified time or until the completion of its specified duties.

ARTICLE V. Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The pastor shall be responsible for the services.

Section 2. Special Services

Revival services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar.

Section 3. Regular Members' Meetings

The church shall hold regular members' meetings quarterly during a designated Wednesday or Sunday service in January, April, July, and October. Financial reports shall be available in writing monthly and other reports may be given as necessary.

Section 4. Special Members' Meetings

The church may conduct called members' meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one-week notice must be given for a specially called members' meeting. The notice shall include subject, date, time and place. Only the subject contained in the notice shall be considered.

Section 5. Parliamentary Rules/Quorum

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all members' meetings of the church with the following two exceptions.

- The pastor, even when serving as moderator, may express his views on any matter before the body.

- The moderator never votes. In case of a tie, the motion is lost.

A quorum consists of those members who attend the members' meeting, provided it is a scheduled meeting or one properly called.

Section 6. Moderator/Parliamentarian

The pastor shall serve as moderator at all members' meetings except those so designated; in his absence the chairman of deacons shall service as moderator. The church shall elect a parliamentarian to interpret and preserve the parliamentary rules of order for all members' meetings. The parliamentarian shall be elected annually and may be re-elected.

ARTICLE VI. Ordinances

Section 1. Believer's Baptism

This church may receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

- Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- The Pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism.
- Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.
- A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff or deacons. If negative interest is ascertained on the part of the candidate, he shall be deleted from the list of those awaiting baptism.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The church shall serve the Lord's Supper for believers at least once a quarter. The observance may be during any worship service. The pastor and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE VII. Finances

Section 1. Budget

The finance committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget for the ensuing fiscal year at the regularly scheduled October members' meeting or a subsequent called members' meeting of each year, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses. Membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Annually there shall be opportunity provided to secure worthy commitments of financial support from the church members.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

Offering envelopes will be provided for member's use. All funds received, for any and all purposes, shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer or financial secretary and be properly recorded on the books of the church. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the finance committee.

Section 3. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

ARTICLE VIII. Church Operations Manual

Section 1. Content

The church shall develop a church operations manual. It should include church policies and procedures. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available for use there by any member of the church. The Church Administrator shall maintain and be responsible for recording changes to the manual.

Section 2. Changes

Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual. Policies and procedures may be added, revised, or deleted by a majority vote of members present and voting.

ARTICLE IX. Amendments to the Bylaws

Section 1. Change Procedure

Changes in the bylaws may be made at any regular or special members' meeting of the church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous members' meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment shall be made available to each resident member.

Section 2. Adoption

Changes to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a two-third majority of the members present and voting.

Submitted by Constitution and Bylaws Committee: Mark Webb, Chairman, Rod Coleman, Jimmie Ford, Susan Kennedy, Kiley London, Evelyn Weldon

Approved on July 17, 2007