



# Southside Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida Bylaws

## PREAMBLE

These Bylaws have been developed through servant prayer under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for the glory of God and the benefit of His Church. They are intended to advance strong covenant relationships among the members of Southside Baptist Church (the Church). These Bylaws constitute an agreement by and among the members that its governance, business and activities will be conducted with spiritual integrity and prayer under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission of the Church. Accordingly, the members of the Church adopt these Bylaws.

The Church Bylaws (Bylaws) will be interpreted and implemented in accordance with the Bible, the Church Charter and Constitution to govern in an orderly manner and to define the rights and responsibilities of each member, thereby fostering the preservation of the liberties of each member. In the event of any inconsistencies or conflicts among the Church's governing documents, the order of precedence will be:

1. The Bible
2. The Church Charter
3. The Church Constitution
4. The Church Bylaws
5. The Policies and Procedures Manual

## ARTICLE I The Members

Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the members of the Church retain the exclusive right of self-governance. The Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. However, it recognizes the benefits of cooperation with other churches and organizations in order to fulfill the Great Commission.

### **A. Qualifications for Membership:**

Any individual meeting the following qualifications may apply for membership in the Church:

1. Professes Jesus Christ as his or her personal Lord and Savior and accepts the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.
2. Has experienced believer's baptism by immersion in obedience to the teachings and example of Jesus Christ.
3. Agrees to abide by the Statement of Faith and Church Membership Covenant as expressed in the Church Constitution.



## **B. Admission of Members**

1. **Application:** Individuals may apply for membership at any worship service, in the Church office or at the Church's membership class.
2. **Review:** The Council of Trustees (the Council) is responsible for reviewing and verifying each individual's qualifications for membership, relying on his or her testimony and other evidence as the Council deems appropriate.
3. **Class Attendance:** Individuals seeking membership shall complete the Church's membership class prior to recommendation for membership, unless exempted by the Council. This class allows the individual to become acquainted with the work, activities and practices of the Church, and with the responsibilities of membership in the Church.
4. **Admission:** An individual recommended by the Council for membership is admitted as a member in the Church by a majority vote at any membership meeting at which a quorum is present.
5. **Other Church Memberships:** Newly admitted members relinquish their membership in other churches. Special circumstances necessitating dual membership may be considered and approved by the Council on an individual basis.

## **C. Duties and Privileges of Members**

In accordance with the duties enumerated in the Church Membership Covenant, each member is privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the Church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.

Under Christ, the Church is governed by its members. Therefore, it is their privilege and responsibility, if physically able, to attend membership meetings (art. V, §A) and to prayerfully review, discuss, and if having attained the age of 16, vote on the following matters:

1. Amendment of Church Charter, Church Constitution or Bylaws (art. V, §D)
2. Election of Trustees (art. II, §B) and Deacons (art. IV, §A, cl. 3)
3. Call and removal of a Senior Pastor, or removal of a Trustee (art. II, §G; (art. III, §A, cls. 2 and 5)
4. Change to the Church membership roll (art. I, §B, cl. 4 and §D)
5. Annual operating budget, any items in excess of 5% of the annual operating budget, all budget reallocations in excess of 5%, or the approval of any increases in the total annual operating budget.
6. Acquisition of land, construction of new buildings, borrowing of funds, or the sale of real property

## **D. Termination of Membership**

Members may be removed from the Church rolls for the following reasons:

1. Death
2. Transfer of membership to another church
3. Voluntary resignation



4. Violation of the Statement of Faith and Church Membership Covenant as expressed in the Church Constitution and upon recommendation of the Council consistent with Matthew 18:15-17.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **The Council of Trustees**

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and subject to the will of the members, the Council is a body of elected servant leaders of the Church. The Council is responsible for the general direction of the ministries and resources of the Church in keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and I Peter 5:1-4.

#### **A. Number and Qualifications**

The Council is comprised of nine Church members who exemplify the qualities described in 1 Corinthians 13, Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Council nominees must be at least 25 years of age and have been a member of the Church for not less than 12 consecutive months prior to being nominated for the Council. In addition to the elected Trustees, the Senior Pastor is a non-voting member of the Council. Other paid staff members or the immediate family of all paid staff members or current Trustees (spouse, siblings, parents, parents-in-law or children) are not eligible to be nominated, elected or serve as Trustees.

#### **B. Election**

A committee of five, consisting of two current Trustees, the Deacon Chair, and two at-large church members who have been elected by the deacon body, shall supervise the process of nominating, evaluating and electing Trustees. Members may submit names of qualified individuals to be considered as candidates for the Council. Qualified individuals will be presented to the Church, who shall then elect individual members by written ballot.

#### **C. Term**

Trustees shall serve a three-year term on a rotating basis. The Church may re-elect a Trustee to serve a second three-year term. When a Trustee, other than the Senior Pastor, has served two consecutive terms, that Trustee shall not be eligible to serve another term for one full year.

#### **D. Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the Council are described in the New Testament. The Council may establish voluntary ministry positions or teams to assist them in fulfilling these responsibilities. The primary responsibilities are to:

1. **Share biblical truth and safeguard the doctrinal purity of the Church.** The Council shall continually monitor, educate and encourage the use of sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, and should make certain that all who teach the Word to the congregation — including paid staff, volunteers and outside speakers — share the Church's fundamental Statement of Faith. (Matthew



- 28:19-20; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; 2 Timothy 2:23-26)
2. **Model Christ-like behavior.** Trustees should be above reproach and serve as examples in speech, faith and action. (Mark 10:42-44; John 13:12-15; 1 Timothy 3:2-5; 1 Timothy 4:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7 & 17; 1 Peter 5:2-3)
  3. **Oversee the administrative matters of the Church.**
    - a. **Financial Responsibilities:** The Council shall oversee the financial policies and procedures and is accountable to the members for maintaining the integrity of all the financial activities of the Church. Each year the Council shall present to the members an annual operating budget for discussion and adoption at an annual membership meeting. The Council shall provide the Church with an annual audit or a set of agreed upon procedures performed by an independent Certified Public Accountant. No money will be solicited by or on behalf of the Church or any of its ministries without the approval of the Council.
    - b. **Human Resource Responsibilities:** The Council shall oversee the personnel policies and procedures of the Church.
    - c. **Pastoral Accountability:** The Council shall provide an annual written evaluation and periodic feedback to the Senior Pastor in terms of his ministerial and administrative effectiveness.
    - d. **Other Responsibilities:** The Council may appoint agents, messengers, and other representatives as appropriate.
  4. **Shepherd the congregation** The Council shall take particular responsibility for shepherding the congregation by:
    - a. Examining and recommending prospective members (art. I, §B).
    - b. Reviewing and acting upon all recommended candidates for offices and positions.
    - c. Overseeing the work of the Deacons to ensure proper care is extended to the congregation.
    - d. Recruiting appropriately gifted members to serve on the various ministry teams of the Church.
    - e. Addressing violations of the Statement of Faith and Church Membership Covenant as expressed in the Church Constitution consistent with Matthew 18:15-17 (art. I, §D, cl. 4).
    - f. Regularly reviewing the involvement and engagement of persons on the membership roll. The Council may make recommendations for pastoral care to the appropriate ministry team(s) and/or may recommend changes of membership status to the Church.
    - g. Coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church.
    - h. Mobilizing the Church to accomplish the Great Commission.

(Ezekiel 34:2-4; Matthew 18:15-17; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 20:28-29; 1 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:16; 1 Peter 5:2)



## **F. Officers and Meetings**

The Council shall meet monthly and as necessary on such dates and at such times as it sets from time to time. Staff members may be invited and/or required to attend Council meetings, as necessary. The Council shall annually elect officers including a chairperson and a recording secretary from among its members. The Council shall also elect from among its members the appropriate corporate officers required by the Church Charter and in compliance with the laws of the State of Florida.

## **G. Removal**

A Trustee's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by removal. Any two church members with reason to believe that a Trustee should be removed must express such concern in a signed written document which will be delivered to the Council chairperson or Senior Pastor. (Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21) The Church shall not act on the removal of any Trustee without affording the Council thirty days to study the matter and make a recommendation to the Church. At any time after such thirty-day study period any member of the Council, with the exception of the Senior Pastor, may be dismissed by an 80% favorable vote of the Church members present, and who have attained the age of 16, at any properly noticed membership meeting of the Church where a quorum is present.

## **H. Vacancy**

A vacancy on the Council may be filled with a qualified Church member by a majority vote of all sitting Trustees at their sole and absolute discretion. If a Trustee is appointed to fill a vacancy the Church will be notified and the appointed individual may begin serving immediately. At the following Annual Members' Meeting the congregation shall nominate and elect a person to complete the term.

# **ARTICLE III The Church Staff**

## **A. The Senior Pastor**

1. **Qualifications** - The Senior Pastor is a non-voting member of the Council and is recognized by the Church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching. He must be orthodox in theology as outlined in the Church Constitution and committed to living and serving in a manner consistent with the standards set forth in Scripture for such leaders.
2. **Selection** - In the selection of the Senior Pastor, a group of seven, known as the Pastor Search Team, will be nominated by the Council and elected at a membership meeting of the Church. The team will be composed of three members of the Council and four members of the Church (two men and two women). Such team shall proceed to select a candidate for Senior Pastor whose gifts, character, and calling fit him for the office to be filled. The candidate must be presented for election by the Church in a special called meeting (art. V, §A, cl. 5c).
3. **Term** - The Senior Pastor serves at the pleasure of the Church and under continuing call until the Church or the Senior Pastor requests otherwise. His



membership on the Council will be continuous as long as he is serving as the Senior Pastor.

4. **Responsibilities** - The Senior Pastor serves as evangelist, shepherd, preacher/teacher, equipper, as a nonvoting member of the Council, and moderator of membership meetings. In the absence or incapacity of the Senior Pastor, the Council shall assume and/or delegate these responsibilities. The primary responsibilities of the Senior Pastor are to:
  - a. **Shepherd.** As shepherd (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-4), the Senior Pastor models the heart of the Good Shepherd and ensures that the Church is well led, fed, cared for, and protected.
  - b. **Preach/Teach.** As preacher/teacher (Acts 6:4, Ephesians 4:11, 2 Timothy 4:1-4, Titus 1:9), the Senior Pastor is a principal communicator of God's Word in public worship and leads the Church in growing toward maturity in Christ through the Spirit-anointed teaching of sound doctrine as taught in the Bible and outlined in the Church Constitution.
  - c. **Equip.** As equipper (Ephesians 4:12-13, 2 Timothy 2:2), the Senior Pastor partners with other leaders to empower and equip maturing members for significant service and ministry by discovering, developing, and deploying their spiritual gifts.
  - d. **Serve as a Trustee.** As a non-voting member of the Council, the Senior Pastor is the principal vision-caster of the Church.
5. **Removal** - If necessary, it is the duty of the Council to implement the removal process of the Senior Pastor. The Council shall have up to 30 days to study the reasons for removal, during which time the Senior Pastor must work in close collaboration with the Council consistent with these Bylaws and Matthew 18:15-17 to bring resolution to the issue. The process may begin in one of two ways:
  - a. Upon notification to the Council by 10% of the membership who have attained the age of 16 years and who are requesting removal by a common letter stating reasons for removal and affixing to the letter the personal signature of each. Following no more than the 30-day study period, the 10% calling for removal will be invited to meet with the Council, If failing to reach an agreement for retention of the Senior Pastor, the matter will be brought before the Church in a special called meeting as soon as practical, consistent with Article V, section A, clauses 3, 4 and 5c of these Bylaws.
  - b. Upon majority vote of the Council for removal. Any motion for removal must include an explanation. When the Council votes for removal the matter must immediately be brought before the Church in a special called meeting as soon as practical, consistent with Article V, section A, clauses 3, 4 and 5c of these Bylaws.

**B. Other Staff** - Creation of new staff positions and changes in organizational structure may be recommended through the Senior Pastor for approval by the Council. Each member of the Church staff will be employed subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the Policies and Procedures Manual. In the event a staff member is not meeting his or her performance guidelines, the Senior Pastor may recommend



termination to the Council. All staff hires and terminations are subject to the approval of the Council.

## **ARTICLE IV Ministry Teams**

### **A. Deacons**

1. **Purpose:** Deacons promote peace, harmony, and a spirit of unity and cooperation among the membership by extending pastoral care through the Church's various small groups. Such groups include, but are not limited to, Sunday School classes, grow groups, small group Bible studies, and ministry teams.
2. **Qualifications:** Deacons must be persons who are exemplary in their conduct, discreet in judgment, of honest report, full of faith, and conscientious that they set worthy examples of cooperation, love and loyalty for all members of the Church, abiding by the principles set forth in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3:8-12.
3. **Election:** Deacons will be nominated by members of the Church and elected by simple majority during a membership meeting when a quorum is present.
4. **Term of Service:** Various terms and conditions of service will be set forth in the Policies and Procedures Manual.
5. **Responsibilities:** Deacons serve the body by:
  - a. Providing pastoral care and servant leadership through small groups.
  - b. Assisting with the preparation and administration of the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, as well as other aspects of corporate worship services as necessary.
  - c. Providing support for new or existing ministries as requested by the Council and/or Church staff and consistent with their giftedness and calling to ministry.

### **B. Other Ministry Teams**

1. **General:** The Council and Church staff shall develop and guide Ministry Teams to effectively mobilize members for ministry. The Church staff has the primary responsibility for identifying, recruiting, equipping, deploying, and leading all members to serve in ministry (Eph. 4:11-13). Ministry teams shall function in accordance with the Policies and Procedures Manual.
2. **Qualifications:** All Ministry Team leaders, including teachers, must be members of the Church and affirm the Church Constitution. The lives of all leaders should reflect God's calling and giftedness for the ministries they lead.
3. **Term:** Ministry Team members and leaders are customarily recruited to serve a one-year term, which may be renewable. Non-members of the Church may be invited to assist in the activities of a Ministry Team as appropriate.



## ARTICLE V Other Governance Matters

### A. Membership Meetings

1. **Quarterly Meetings:** The Church shall meet for a time of corporate reflection and celebration each quarter. During these meetings, the Council and Senior Pastor shall update the members on the current status of the Church. Official Church business may be conducted at these meetings if a quorum is present.
2. **Annual Meeting:** The final Quarterly Meeting of each calendar year will be the Annual Membership Meeting. At the Annual Meeting the members shall vote on the annual operating budget for the upcoming year, elect new Trustees, elect Deacons and conduct other business as required if a quorum is present.
3. **Special Called Meetings:** Special called membership meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor, Council, Chairman of the Deacons, or upon written request of not less than ten percent (10%) of voting Church members. Should such a request be made by ten percent (10%) of voting Church members, the meeting must be called for the first available date for which proper notice can be given.
4. **Notice:** The notice of any membership meeting must be issued not less than ten (10) days in advance of the meeting date in official Church communications. The purpose(s) for any special called meeting will also be stated at the time of notification.
5. **Quorum:**
  - a. **Members' Meetings:** The governance of the Church is vested in its members who have attained the age of 16 years, fifty (50) of whom will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any members' meeting. When a quorum is physically present, a majority of those members voting in the affirmative will be effective to bind the Church except for conditions listed in parts b and c below.
  - b. **Amending Church Governing Documents:** At any meeting at which the members are voting on adoption of or amendment to the Bylaws, a quorum will consist of fifty (50) members who have attained the age of 16 years. When a quorum is physically present, a favorable vote of two-thirds (2/3) of these members voting in the affirmative is required for such adoption or amendment.
  - c. **Call and Removal of Senior Pastor:** At any meeting in which the members are voting on the call or removal of the Senior Pastor, a quorum will consist of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the membership of the Church who have attained the age of 16 years and are physically present. At least eighty percent (80%) of these members voting in the affirmative is required for election or removal of the Senior Pastor.
  - d. **Meetings of Other Leadership Groups:** In any meeting of the Council or any other appointed decision-making body, a quorum will consist of not less than a majority of the members of that group. When a quorum is present, a majority of those present and voting in the affirmative will be effective to bind that body. These groups may meet with less than a quorum; however, such action as may be taken or passed on will not become effective until such



- e. time as enough of the remaining absent members of the group have been polled thereon, and a majority vote of the members will have been secured in writing. When it becomes necessary to resort to such polling, the result thereof will be made a matter of record in the minutes of the following meeting of the group. Members may be considered present if they are participating through the use of electronic means by which they are fully able to communicate.
- f. The minutes of all meetings where Church business is conducted or decisions made affecting the Church will be recorded in writing and filed in the business office.

## **B. Policies and Procedures Manual**

The Council is responsible for oversight and maintenance of a Policies and Procedures Manual for the day-to-day administrative functions of the Church not covered in the Constitution and the Bylaws. Subjects covered will include, but not be limited to, personnel, financial matters, ministry teams, property and facilities, and other policies and procedures as needed. A copy of the Policies and Procedures Manual will be available in the business office during normal office hours for the members' review. Any suggested changes may be recommended to and decided by the Council.

## **C. Procedures for Distribution of Assets upon Dissolution**

In the event of dissolution of the Church, due to any cause, the assets will be distributed as follows:

1. All debts will be paid in full.
2. Real and personal property owned by the Church will be sold or donated upon the recommendation of the Council and approval by the Church.
3. If sufficient funds remain, Church employees will be considered for a severance package as recommended by the Council and approved by the Church.
4. Remaining funds will be distributed upon the recommendation of the Council and approval by the Church to one or more organizations which qualify as tax-exempt as described in Sections 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the corresponding provision of any future law.

## **D. Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws**

1. **Adoption:** The Bylaws will be adopted at a properly noticed membership meeting as set forth in Article V.
2. **Amendment:** The Bylaws may be amended at a properly noticed membership meeting as set forth in Article V. Any proposal to change these Bylaws must be submitted to the Council for review. The Council shall submit the proposed change(s) to the Church at the next Membership Meeting with the Council's recommendation for action.

## **E. Records**

The official printed copy of the Bylaws will be retained in a secure location. All amendments will be attached to the official printed copy. A current copy of the Bylaws, as amended, will be available in the business office during regular office hours for the members' review.

