



CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We, the members of Fellowship Baptist Church, declare and establish this Constitution for the preservation of the principles of our faith and the scriptural governance of our body in order to fulfill our God-ordained purpose and mission.

Article 1. Name

The name of this church is FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH of Joplin, MO.

Article 2. Purpose

Fellowship Baptist Church exists by the grace of God and for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its ministries and activities. This church is organized for exclusively faith purposes (including charitable purposes common to Christian ministry as defined by Scripture). Our purpose is to

- **Exalt God** (1 Corinthians 10:31, Psalm 96)
- **Edify the Body** (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- **Evangelize the Lost** (Matthew 28:18-20)

This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through: worshipping Him; equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study; proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching, personal evangelism, missions work, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture.

Article 3. Statement of Faith¹

3.1. The Scriptures

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

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

3.2. God

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

3.2.1. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff; 20:1ff; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

3.2.2. God the Son

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

¹ Articles 3.1 through 3.18 of the Statement of Faith were sourced from the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Genesis 18:1ff; Psalms 2:7ff; 110:1ff; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5; 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

3.2.3. God the Holy Spirit

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

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

3.3. Man

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

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

3.4. Salvation

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

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

- B. **Repentance** is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.
- C. **Justification** is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.
- D. **Sanctification** is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.
- E. **Glorification** is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

3.5. God's Purpose of Grace

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

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

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

3.6. The Church

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

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

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

3.7. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

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

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

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

3.8. The Lord's Day

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

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

3.9. The Kingdom

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

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

3.10. Last Things

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

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

3.11. Evangelism and Missions

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

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2:8-26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

3.12. Education

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

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

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

3.13. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12:16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

3.14. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary,

educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

3.15. The Christian and the Social Order

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

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

3.16. Peace and War

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

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

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

3.17. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access

to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

3.18. The Family

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

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

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

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

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

3.19. Marriage

Fellowship Baptist Church teaches and holds to the Biblical view on marriage. Marriage, according to the Holy Bible, is the exclusive, covenantal union of one biological man and one biological woman (see Article 3.20). Marriage was designed and defined by God in the very order of creation. Genesis 2:24 states "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."² In this passage, God clearly defines the marriage covenant as being between one male and one female. Man and woman were created to complement and complete each other.

The New Testament affirms this man-woman covenant in Matthew 19:4-6, where Jesus states, "He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

² All Scripture references are from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

Fellowship Baptist Church will faithfully follow this clear Biblical definition of marriage in all of the teachings and practices of this church.

Fellowship Baptist Church considers wedding ceremonies as public worship gatherings of the church. Therefore, Fellowship Baptist Church (including elders, employees, and representatives) will not officiate, solemnize, perform, or host on or in church property or facilities a marriage, marriage-like ceremony, or any other exchange of vows, regardless of how such ceremony may be defined, involving anything other than the biblically-defined union of one man with one woman as instituted by God.

3.20. Human Sexuality and Gender

Fellowship Baptist Church views sexual gender as a gift of God, assigned as God's will at the conception of every individual. Gender, the biological sex of an individual assigned at conception, is part of God's glory and creation. God created us male and female, in his image, and for his glory. Fellowship Baptist Church will apply these biblical views of creation, sexuality, and gender identity in making personnel, policy, facility use, and other decisions.

Article 4. Church Covenant

As members of Fellowship Baptist Church, we covenant together to

- **Commit to Christ.** We confess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, having repented, believed, and been saved by grace through faith. We commit to grow in the knowledge and obedience to Jesus Christ according to His Word. (Colossians 2:6-7)
- **Gather Together.** We participate regularly in corporate worship, the Lord's Supper, and Members Meetings; gathering together to build one another up in love, grace, and truth. (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- **Pursue Holiness.** We strive to live Godly lives in the power of the Holy Spirit, resisting sin and pursuing righteousness, humility, and integrity in every area of life, so that our conduct reflects our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:15-16)
- **Support the Church.** We support the ministry of the church through faithful prayer, financial giving, and service. We affirm our responsibility to submit to the church's leadership as they strive to shepherd the church according to Scripture. (Hebrews 13:17)
- **Share the Gospel.** We accept responsibility to share the good news of Jesus Christ in our homes, community, and to the nations, making disciples as Jesus commanded. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Article 5. Relationships

Fellowship Baptist Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of external or denominational control. Recognizing the benefits of cooperation with other churches in the fulfillment of its purposes, the church may voluntarily associate with other churches or organizations in so far as is consistent with our purpose and Statement of Faith.

Article 6. Bylaws

The church shall adopt such Bylaws as necessary to carry out the mission and purpose of the church.

Article 7. Amendment

Amendments to this Constitution may be made by a three-quarters majority vote of affirmation by members present and voting at any quarterly Members Meeting, provided the amendment has been offered in writing at a previous quarterly Members Meeting, and has been announced at a Worship Gathering for two consecutive Sundays prior to such vote. A revised version shall be made available to members for review.



BYLAWS

1. Membership

1.1. Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, an individual must

- Be a believer in Jesus Christ who has repented of their sin and believed in the gospel (Mark 1:15);
- Provide evidence of regeneration (1 John 2:3, 3:14; 2 Corinthians 12:3);
- Be baptized in obedience to Christ, by immersion according to Scripture following his or her regeneration (Acts 2:38-39);
- Submit to the teaching of Scripture, understanding the church teaches Scripture in accordance with its Statement of Faith (2 Timothy 3:16-17); and
- Commit to abide by the Constitution, Bylaws, and Church Covenant (Hebrews 13:17).

The Elders shall be responsible for examining member candidates to ensure they are qualified for membership.

1.2. Admission of Members

The process of church membership is as follows:

- Request a membership packet from an elder and be introduced to the congregation as member candidate in a Worship Gathering;
- An elder shall interview each candidate and determine whether the candidate is qualified for membership;
- A qualified candidate shall be recommended by the Elders to the church members for admission and be affirmed by a two-thirds majority vote by the members voting and present at any Members Meeting; and

- New members shall, at that point, relinquish their membership in all other churches.

Prospective members shall request membership based upon:

- Profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior followed by baptism by immersion- (If a person is providentially hindered from baptism by immersion, the Elders may, at their discretion, waive the requirement); or
- Personal statement of faith in Jesus Christ, having been baptized by immersion following salvation.

1.3. Responsibilities and Privileges of Membership

In accordance with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be 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, abilities, and resources each has received from God.

The responsibilities and privileges of church membership include, but are not limited to,

- Abiding by the Church Covenant,
- Participating in worship gatherings,
- Attending Members Meeting,
- Contributing to the general budget of the church, and
- Engaging in the life of the congregation through participation in the ministries and activities of the church.

Furthermore, it is the responsibility and privilege of all church members in good standing, not under disciplinary action, and who have passed their sixteenth birthday to vote on all elections and matters brought to a vote of the congregation.

The Elders shall review the membership roster annually to ensure an accurate account of the membership.

1.4. Member in Good Standing

A member in good standing is one who fulfills the responsibilities and privileges of membership to the best of his or her ability. A member who has not reasonably participated in worship gatherings for six months shall no longer be considered a member in good standing and subject to church discipline.

1.5. Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church and/or rendering doubtful a profession of faith, shall be subject to the admonition and/or discipline of the Elders and/or the church, according to Matthew 18:15-17.

The steps of the disciplinary process shall follow the process set forth in Matthew 18.

- It is the duty of every member of this church, who has knowledge of doctrinal error or unbiblical conduct of another member to warn and correct the erring member in private, seeking their repentance and restoration. This step may be repeated.
- If the member does not heed this warning, the member warning them shall go to them again, accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm there has been a refusal to

repent. There is no specified time interval between the first and second step. This step may be repeated.

- If the erring member does not heed this warning, it shall be brought to the attention of the Elders. If the Elders determine, after thorough investigation, that there is evidence that the erring member continues to refuse to repent, they may then inform the church body at a Member's Meeting in order that the church body may call the erring member to repentance and pray for them. If the erring member demonstrates repentance, notice to that effect shall be made as soon as possible.
- If the erring member does not repent in response to a collective call to repentance, the elders shall present a motion to the congregation for exclusion. A two-thirds majority vote of affirmation by the members present and voting at any Members Meeting shall be required to exclude the erring member. Upon exclusion, the erring member shall be publicly dismissed from membership and may be excluded from participation in church worship gatherings, ordinances, events, and activities.

Church discipline may include admonishment from the Elders and/or congregation, removal from ministry position, or removal from membership (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 1 Timothy 5: 19-20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

1.6. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated upon a member's

- Death,
- Joining or becoming active in another church,
- Request of the member, or
- Exclusion by church action.

Exclusion by action of the church shall be brought as a recommendation from the Elders, and affirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting. When membership is terminated, the congregation shall be notified in the minutes of the next quarterly Members Meeting. If a member resigns his or her membership during the discipline process, or is removed for a disciplinary action, any request for a church letter from another church shall indicate such.

2. Meetings

2.1. Worship Gatherings

The church shall gather each Lord's Day (Sunday) and throughout the week as the Elders determine. All gatherings shall be carried out under the direction of the Elders.

2.2. Members Meetings

The Elders shall call regular meetings of the church membership for the purpose of

- Reporting on church business and activities;
- Changing the Constitution, Bylaws, or Statement of Faith;
- Electing church officers;
- Admitting members;

- Disciplining or excluding members;
- Proposing significant changes related to properties and facilities;
- Approving the annual budget; and
- Voting on such other matters as deemed appropriate by the Elders.

The Elders shall be responsible for ensuring any required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible parties.

Member Meetings shall be moderated by the designated moderator according to Bylaw 3.4. The Simplified Handbook of Parliamentary Procedure shall govern all proceedings, except when in conflict with these Bylaws, in which event these Bylaws shall govern.

2.2.1. Quorum

Provided all provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present and voting.

2.2.2. Motions

Motions to be presented at any Members Meeting shall come from the Elders. Unless otherwise indicated, all votes are a simple majority.

Any church member in good standing may submit a motion to the Elders. Motions must be submitted in writing to the Elders at least two weeks prior to the Members Meeting. The Elders shall report to the congregation regarding all motions, but may, at their discretion, decline to bring a motion to a vote of the congregation.

If the Elders decline to bring the motion to a vote of the congregation, the church member who submitted the motion, may move to bring the original motion submitted to the Elders to a vote of the congregation at the Members Meeting, once the Elders have reported on the original motion. If the church member so moves and receives a second, the congregation shall vote regarding bringing the original motion to a vote of the congregation. If the motion to bring the original motion to a vote of the congregation receives a simple majority, the original motion shall be brought to the congregation at the Members Meeting for a vote.

2.2.3. Quarterly Members Meeting

Regular Members Meeting shall be scheduled quarterly, at a time apart from a public Worship Gathering, as determined by the Elders and announced at any Worship Gathering for two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting.

2.2.4. Special Called Members Meeting

Special Called Members Meetings may be called as needed by the Elders. The date, time, and purpose of the Special Called Members Meeting shall be announced at least seven days—including at least one Worship Gathering—prior to the meeting.

An emergency Special Called Members Meeting may be called without prior notice for exceptional circumstances with a three-fourths majority vote of the combined Elders and Deacons. If such an emergency meeting is called, the congregation shall vote to approve the calling of the emergency Special Called Members Meeting as the first order of business.

Members may request a Special Called Members Meeting by submitting a written request to the Elders and signed by at least twenty-five percent of the total church membership. In the event of a written request from the members, the Elders shall schedule a Special Called Members Meeting within thirty days of their receipt of the request.

3. Leadership

Biblical church offices are elders and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions of treasurer, moderator, and clerk. All leaders must be church members in good standing prior to and during their service in leadership roles.

3.1. Elders

The terms pastor, elder, overseer, and shepherd refer to the same biblical role, function, and office; and may be used interchangeably. The Elders shall be comprised of no less than five men, including the staff elders.

3.1.1. Qualification

The qualifications for elders are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

3.1.2. Selection

Any qualified man, who is a church member in good standing, may be considered for the office of elder. The process for selecting an elder shall be as follows.

- Any church member may recommend any qualified man who is a church member in good standing to the Elders.
- The Elders shall consider all recommendations and examine the individual's qualification, gifting, and aspiration.
- Upon examination, if the Elders deem him qualified, gifted, and aspiring; he may be nominated as an elder candidate to the congregation by a unanimous vote of the Elders.
- Elder candidates shall be presented to the church in any gathering of the church at least thirty days prior to a vote of affirmation. Church members shall have an opportunity to hear the candidate's testimony and submit questions, comments, or concerns; which shall be considered by the Elders.
- Elder candidates shall be affirmed by a three-fourths majority vote of affirmation by the members present and voting at any Members Meeting.
- Upon a vote of affirmation, elder candidates shall be ordained and/or installed as an elder during a Worship Gathering.

Once affirmed to office, an elder shall serve a six-year term. After the expiration of the six-year term, he shall take a one-year sabbatical. Following the sabbatical year, upon the completion of the elder selection process, he may be reinstalled to the office of elder.

3.1.3. Responsibilities

The Elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the Elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word, and shepherding God's flock. The Elders shall fulfill the following four primary functions:

- **Know the Flock** (Proverbs 27:23; 1 Peter 5:2). The Elders shall seek to collectively know each member, to be acquainted with their individual situation, and to care for them spiritually.
- **Feed the Flock** (1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9). The Elders oversee and approve all Bible teaching in the church.
- **Lead the Flock** (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2-3; 1 Timothy 5:17). The Elders lead in communicating the vision, goal, and purposes of the church to the congregation.
- **Protect the Flock** (Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9-11). The Elders are responsible to see that all ministries of the church are functioning within sound doctrine.

The Elders shall select members of the church in good standing to serve each of the official corporate positions.

3.1.4. Staff Elders

3.1.4.1. Lead Elder

The lead elder serves as the church's primary teacher and is a member of the Elders as first among equals. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Bylaw 3.1.3 above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted for a full-time financially supported ministry of preaching and teaching.

The lead elder shall be responsible to

- Lead worship gatherings,
- Administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper,
- Supervise and evaluate all staff elders and support staff, and
- Perform other duties as pertain to that office as set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws.

These responsibilities may be delegated to other individuals with the approval of the Elders. In his absence or incapacity, the Elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which may be delegated. The lead elder shall not be subject to the six-year term limit of elders.

3.1.4.2. Additional Staff Elders

The church may call additional staff elders who shall serve under the leadership of the lead elder. Staff elders shall perform the duties of an elder described in Bylaw 3.1.3 above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted for a financially supported ministry.

Staff elders shall assist the lead elder in the performance of his regular duties and perform other duties as pertains to the office of elder set forth in a formal job description approved by the Elders. Staff elders shall not be subject to the six-year term limit of elders.

3.1.4.3. Election of Staff Elders

In the calling of any man to a staff elder position, the Elders shall establish a Search Team. The Search Team shall consist of two elders and four church members. The Elders shall present the Search Team to the congregation for a vote of affirmation by the members present and voting in any Members Meeting.

The Search Team shall serve under the authority of the Elders and be responsible to:

- Advertise the elder position opportunity;
- Evaluate submitted resumes;
- Interview potential candidates, assessing his testimony, qualifications, and ministry ability;
- Ensure the man wholeheartedly agrees with the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant;
- Ensure the congregation has adequate opportunity to meet and assess the preaching ability and gifting of the elder candidate (giving notice to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the man coming to preach); and
- Upon completion of the process, the Search Team shall make a recommendation to the Elders as to the hiring of the elder candidate.

Upon recommendation to the Elders, the Elders shall determine whether to present the elder candidate to the congregation for a vote of affirmation. If the Elders determine to present the elder candidate, they shall call a Special Called Members Meeting. A three-fourths majority vote of affirmation by the members present and voting at the Special Called Members Meeting shall be required to hire a salaried elder.

3.1.5. Elder Meetings

The Elders shall meet at least once per month to discuss the shepherding and care of the congregation. The Elders shall select one of their members to serve as chairman and one of their members to serve as secretary of the Elders every two years. Neither the lead elder nor staff elders may serve as chairman. Notice of elder meetings – including date, time, and location – shall be made to the congregation.

3.1.6. Accountability

Elders are to continually hold one another accountable to the standards of Scripture and the requirements of their job descriptions. The Elders shall develop and maintain a written, formal accountability structure. All staff elders shall receive a performance review led by the Elders each year.

Any church member who witnesses or has direct knowledge of any unrepentant sin, false doctrine, or disqualifying activity of any elder shall first confront that elder privately according to Matthew 18:15-17 and Bylaw 1.4.

3.1.7. Resignation and Termination

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation, dismissal, or by expiration of his term of office.

Any two members with reason to believe that an elder has disqualified himself from his office should express such concern in writing to the Elders according to 1 Timothy 5:17-21. The Elders shall consider any charges made against an elder and determine if the elder has disqualified himself according to the qualifications outlined in Bylaw 3.1.1. If the Elders determine he has disqualified himself, they shall present a motion of removal to the congregation in any Members Meeting. A three-fourths majority vote of affirmation by the members present and voting in any Members Meeting shall be required to remove any man from the office of elder. A staff elder who is removed from the office of elder shall be immediately terminated from his salaried position.

3.2. Deacons

The office of deacon is described in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons serve under the authority of the Elders and provide for the physical needs of the church, enabling elders to focus on prayer, the ministry of the Word, and caring for the membership.

3.2.1. Qualification

The qualifications for deacons are set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

3.2.2. Selection

Any qualified man, who is a church member in good standing, may be considered for the office of deacon. The process for selecting a deacon shall be as follows.

- Any church member may recommend any qualified man who is a church member in good standing to the Elders;
- The Elders and Deacons shall consider any recommendation and examine the individual's qualification, gifting, and aspiration;
- Upon examination, if the Elders and Deacons deem him qualified, gifted, and aspiring, he may be nominated as a deacon candidate to the congregation by a unanimous vote of the Elders and Deacons;
- Deacon candidates shall be presented to the church in any gathering of the church at least thirty days prior to a vote of affirmation. Church members shall have opportunity to hear their testimony and submit questions, comments, or concerns; which shall be considered by the Elders and Deacons;
- Deacon candidates shall be affirmed by a three-fourths majority vote of members present and voting at any Members Meeting; and
- Upon a vote of affirmation, deacon candidates shall be ordained and/or installed as a deacon during a Worship Gathering.

Once affirmed to office, a deacon shall serve a three-year term to be renewed upon recommendation by the Elders and affirmed by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting.

3.2.3. Responsibilities

Deacons serve and support the ministry of the church, functioning under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Elders according to Acts 6:1-7. Deacons shall fulfill four primary functions:

- **Serve the Flock** (Acts 6:3). Deacons serve in a specific assigned task. They provide oversight for that task or area of ministry. They may assemble a team to assist with their task. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any deacon assignment shall reside in the hands of the Elders. Deacons encourage and equip others in the service of the church.
- **Care for the Flock** (Acts 6:1-4). Deacons assist the Elders in caring for the congregation by serving the physical needs of church members.
- **Promote Unity within the Flock** (Acts 6:1-3). Deacons protect and promote church unity. The office of deacon was founded to help with a potentially divisive issue. There were two

“factions” in the church who did not feel equally treated. The deacons were called to help solve the issue and restore unity to the body. Deacons stay abreast of the pulse of the congregation, always striving to bring unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

- **Lead the Flock by Example** (Acts 6:3). Deacons serve as examples of growing in their knowledge of God and obedience to His Word. Additionally, each deacon should be involved in the Titus 2 process of discipleship and raising up others to serve alongside them.

3.2.4. Deacon Meetings

The Deacons shall meet at least once per quarter to coordinate the various ministries and teams of the church. An elder, selected by the Elders, shall moderate all deacon meetings. Notice of deacon meetings – including date, time, and location – shall be made to the congregation.

3.2.5. Accountability

Deacons are to continually hold one another accountable to the standards of Scripture and the requirements of their job descriptions; and are accountable to the Elders. The Elders shall develop and maintain a written, formal accountability structure.

3.2.6. Resignation and Termination

A deacon’s term of office may be terminated by resignation, dismissal, or by the expiration of his term of office.

Any two members with reason to believe that a deacon has disqualified himself from his office should express such concern in writing to the Elders. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21 and outlined in Bylaw 1.4. If the Elders determine the deacon has disqualified himself, they shall present a motion of removal to the congregation in any Members Meeting. A three-fourths majority vote of affirmation by the members present and voting in any Members Meeting shall be required to remove any man from the office of deacon.

3.3. Treasurer

The treasurer shall be a church member nominated by the Elders and affirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of members present and voting at any Members Meeting. The treasurer shall serve a two-year term.

The treasurer shall be responsible for

- Supporting the Elders in providing oversight of the finances of the church;
- Maintaining custody of church funds and ensure all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate;
- Presenting regular reports of account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at each quarterly Members Meeting;
- Maintaining full and accurate records of receipts and disbursements, and that adequate controls are implemented to ensure all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church; and
- Providing the Elders, whenever they may require it, an account of all activities as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

The treasurer may share these responsibilities with the members of the Finance Team.

3.4. Moderator

The moderator and assistant moderator shall be church members, nominated by the Elders, and affirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting. The moderator and assistant moderator shall serve a two-year term. In the absence or incapacity of the moderator or assistant moderator, an elder shall call the meeting to order and nominate an elder to temporarily perform the duties of the moderator.

3.5. Clerk

The clerk shall be a church member, nominated by the Elders, and affirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting. The clerk shall serve a two-year term. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the Elders shall appoint a church member in good standing to temporarily perform the duties of the clerk.

It shall be the duty of the clerk to

- Record the minutes of all Members Meetings,
- Preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and
- Render reports as requested by the Elders or the church.

The clerk may assign duties to the church secretary, if there is one in the employ of the church.

3.6. Ministry and Support Staff

The Elders may direct the Personnel Team to hire ministry or support staff provided funds are available in the budget or approved by the congregation in addition to the budget. A written job description shall be written by the Personnel Team and approved by the Elders before hiring any staff member.

Ministry staff shall be nominated by the Personnel Team and the Elders, and affirmed by a three-fourths majority vote of by the members present and voting at any Members Meeting. Support staff shall be nominated by the Personnel Team and affirmed by the Elders.

4. Teams and Groups

The Elders shall form such teams and groups as necessary to carry out specific tasks in fulfilling the mission and purpose of the church efficiently and effectively.

Teams and groups shall be given a written scope of responsibility and authority approved by the Elders to guide them in fulfilling their purpose and function. They shall regularly report to the Elders and the congregation as to their ongoing progress. The Lead Elder shall serve as an ex-officio member of all teams and groups.

Team members shall be members of the church in good standing nominated and affirmed by the Deacons (unless affirmation by the church is required according to the Bylaws or Scope of Responsibility and Authority). Permanent teams shall be benevolence, finance, personnel, facility, and missions.

Group members shall be members of the church in good standing appointed by the Elders. The Elders shall notify the congregation of all groups and their members at each quarterly Members Meeting.

4.1. Benevolence Team

The Benevolence Team serves the church in matters related to the physical care of church members and those in the community. The team shall be comprised of a deacon selected by the Elders and at least three church members affirmed by the Deacons. The church members shall serve two-year terms. The deacon shall lead the Benevolence Team.

The Benevolence Team shall be responsible for

- Studying the Scriptures to develop a biblical understanding of benevolence ministry;
- Developing and implementing a plan to assist those with temporal needs, as well as addressing their spiritual need with the gospel;
- Identifying and maintaining a list of churches and community agencies who provide assistance to those with temporal needs; and
- Administering benevolence funds.

4.2. Finance Team

The Finance Team serves the church in matters related to finances. The team shall be comprised of the treasurer, chairman of the counting team, lead elder, staff elders, an elder selected by the Elders each year, and four church members affirmed by a vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting. The church members shall serve a four-year term on a rotation basis with one person rotating off and one person rotating on the team each year. The treasurer and the church members serving on the Finance Team may serve as the check signers for the church. The treasurer shall lead the Finance Team.

The Finance Team shall be responsible for

- Administering receipts and distribution of all funds;
- Establishing financial policies, procedures, and safeguards to ensure the integrity of the church and its officers; and
- Assisting the Elders and the Personnel Team in financial matter related to employed personnel including salaries, benefits, and personnel service.

4.2.1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall run from January 1 through December 31.

4.2.2. Budget

The Finance Team shall work with the Elders to prepare an annual budget for the church after prayerfully considering requests and needs for funds from the various ministries of the church. The annual budget shall be approved by the Elders and presented to the church for affirmation by a vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.

4.2.3. Counting Team

The Finance Team shall ensure that appropriate measures are taken to count and record the moneys received by the church by establishing a Counting Team. The Elders shall nominate a church member in good standing to serve as the chairman of the Counting Team and shall be affirmed every two years by a vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting. The chairman shall select, as needed, members of the congregation, approved by the Finance Team to assist in the counting and recording of all funds received by the church on a rotation basis. There shall be different people to count the offering each Sunday of the month.

Funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the counting team and the records delivered to the church office. The church office shall keep a record of all offerings and receipts.

4.3. Personnel Team

The Personnel Team serves the church in matters related to employed personnel. The team shall be comprised of an elder selected by the Elders each year, a deacon selected by the Elders, and four church members affirmed by a vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting. The church members shall serve four-year terms on a rotation basis with one person rotating off and one person rotating on the team each year. The elder shall lead the Personnel Team.

The Personnel Team shall be responsible for

- Recommending salary packages and benefits to the Finance Team and the Elders,
- Writing job descriptions,
- Developing personnel policies and procedures, and
- Hiring ministry and support staff.

Decisions or actions of the Personnel Team which change the church budget shall be approved by the Finance Team, the Elders, and affirmed by a vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting.

Disciplinary actions involving a staff elder shall be referred to the Elders for review according to Bylaw 3.1.6. and 3.2.5. Disciplinary actions involving a member of the ministry or support staff shall be handled by the lead elder in consultation with the Personnel Team and the Elders.

4.4. Facility Team

The Facility Team serves the church in matters related to properties, facilities, and vehicles. The Facility Team shall consist of one elder selected by the Elders each year, one deacon selected by the Elders, and four church members affirmed by a vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting. The church members shall serve a four-year term on a rotation basis with one person rotating off and one person rotating on the team each year. The deacon shall lead the Facility Team.

The Facility Team is responsible for

- Maintaining the building, grounds, and property of the church;
- Overseeing all activities associated with the operation, maintenance, safety, and security of all buildings, grounds, furnishings, and equipment owned by the church, except items expressly the responsibility of another team or member; and
- Assisting the Elders concerning matters related to the building, facilities, and grounds.

4.5. Missions Team

The Mission Team serves the church in matters related to missions. The Missions Team shall consist of one elder selected by the Elders each year, one deacon selected by the Elders, and four church members affirmed by a vote of the members present and voting at any Members Meeting. The church members shall serve a four-year term on a rotation basis with one person rotating off and one person rotating on the team each year. The elder shall lead the Missions Team.

The Missions Team is responsible for

- Maintaining communication with each of the church-supported missionaries;
- Researching and coordinating mission opportunities for the church;
- Promoting missions within the church; and
- Administering the short-term mission fund.

5. Ordinances

Fellowship Baptist Church recognizes Jesus Christ gave the church two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

5.1. Baptism

A person who repents of their sin and trusts in Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any Worship Gathering, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord shall be received for baptism.

- Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- Baptism shall be administered by an elder or an individual approved by the Elders.
- Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any Worship Gathering.
- After baptism, a person shall be eligible for membership in the church as outlined in Bylaw 1.2.

5.2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church through partaking of the bread and the cup, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

- The Lord's Supper shall be observed in a Worship Gathering, at least quarterly, as scheduled by the Elders.
- The Elders shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- A deacon shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

6. Amendments

Bylaws may be amended by a three-fourths majority vote of affirmation by the members present and voting at any Members Meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at a Worship Gathering at least thirty days prior, and shall have been announced two consecutive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised Bylaws shall be made available to all church members.