

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We declare and establish this Constitution in order that we may preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and that this church may be governed in an orderly manner. Furthermore, this Constitution is so established to insure the liberties of each individual member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

Article I. Name

This body shall be known as Matthew Road Baptist Church and is located at 4601 Matthew Road, Grand Prairie, Texas 75052.

Article II. Statement of Faith

We believe in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Holy Bible is the divinely inspired word of God and it is the basis for our statement of faith.

We acknowledge Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, today and forever," as the Son of God and the sole authority of our faith and practice.

We believe the New Testament teaches that the simple conditions of salvation for lost mankind are repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

We recognize baptism and the Lord's Supper as the two ordinances of the church.

We believe and emphasize the soul's competency before God, freedom of religion, and the priesthood of the believer.

We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, personally committed to Him and to following the leadership of the Holy Spirit in sharing the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ with non-believers.

Article III. Vision Statement

God has called us to share His love with the mid-cities and beyond in ways that will enable them to become fully developing followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Article IV. Statement of Affiliation

This Baptist church shall be an organized body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, equal in rank and privilege having no control by any other ecclesiastical body but recognizing Jesus Christ as its head. This body shall be affiliated with the Dallas Baptist Association, The Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Convention. When it is practical, this church will cooperate with and support these associations but it is absolutely independent in managing its own affairs.

Article V. Church Covenant

Having been led of the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness, and to promote its prosperity and spirituality. We seek to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We further desire to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, to the expenses of the church, to the relief of the poor, and to the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We also seek to maintain family and solitary devotions, to religiously educate our children, to encourage the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances, and to walk circumspectly in the world. We long to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment. We discourage all tattling, backbiting, excessive anger, and a lifestyle not in keeping with godly character. Furthermore, we promote zealous efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We are to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress, and to cultivate Christian sympathy. We must be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation being mindful of the scriptural principles.

Upon a transfer from this church, members are encouraged to unite with a Bible-believing church where they can continue the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Article VI. Objectives

The Church shall have as its objectives:

1. **Worship:** Provide opportunities for people to worship God the Father through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Evangelism:** Declare to all people what God has done for their salvation through Jesus Christ.
3. **Discipleship:** Lead the saved to grow in Christian maturity.
4. **Fellowship:** Establish a bond of Christ-like love for the church family.
5. **Ministry:** Respond lovingly to people's physical as well as spiritual needs in Jesus' name.

Amendment 1 to the Constitution effective October 23, 2005:

That there be a minimum of two (2) weeks written notice in the bulletin for any special called business meetings including a general statement about the subject matter.

Article I. Membership

Section 1. General Statement

Church membership shall consist of those persons who have publicly confessed their belief and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; who have had a believer's baptism in this church or in a church of like faith and order; who believe in and adhere to the beliefs and practices of this church; and who have been received into its membership by a majority vote of its congregation in open meeting. Should a material objection arise to a candidate seeking membership in the church, the matter will be referred to the Pastor and Deacons for review. Within sixty days of receiving the referral, the Pastor and Chairman of the Deacons will make a recommendation to the church whether the candidate should be considered for membership in the church.

Section 2. Conditions of Membership

A person may ask to join the church in one of the following ways:

By Profession of Faith:

Anyone making a public profession of his faith and acceptance of Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior may be received as a candidate for believer's baptism and after that into full fellowship and membership in the church.

On Promise of a Letter:

Members of other Baptist Churches of like faith and order may present themselves for membership on promise of a letter. The church secretary will then take the necessary action to secure the letter.

By Statement:

If a person has lost his letter from a Baptist church of like faith and order, or was a member of a Baptist church that no longer exists, or has an elapsed membership in a Baptist church, he shall be received into the membership of Matthew Road Baptist Church based on the affirmation of his personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Furthermore, if a person has been baptized by immersion in compliance with Baptist doctrine and seeks membership from another Christian denomination, he shall be received by statement into membership based on the affirmation of his personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

By Restoration:

Anyone whose church membership has been terminated may become a member in good standing by the majority vote of the church upon evidence of his repentance.

By Watchcare:

A person who is a member of another Baptist church of like faith and order may request Associate Membership with all membership privileges except voting rights.

Section 3. Voting Rights of Members

Every member of the church is entitled to one vote on any matter coming before the church for its consideration. This vote shall be exercised in person and not by proxy. All such matters shall be determined at a regular or a special conference of the church held in accordance with these By-Laws. The result of a vote shall be determined by a majority vote of the members present. The exceptions to this shall be, 1.) a vote to accept a church membership application does not require a church conference, 2.) the percentage of affirmative votes required to call a church pastor is at least 90%, 3.) a vote to change the Constitution and/or By-laws requires a two-third's majority vote, 4.) a vote to exclude a member requires a two-third's majority vote.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Church membership may be terminated in the following cases:

(1) Upon death.

- (2) Upon issuance of a church letter of transfer and recommendation for membership in some other Baptist Church.
- (3) Reasonable evidence that a member has united with another church.
- (4) The member has joined a cult or ism whose teachings do not adhere to basic concepts of the New Testament.
- (5) Upon exclusion by action of this church.
- (6) Upon written request of the member.

Section 5. Discipline

In the matter of discipline, redemptive rather than punitive action should be the fundamental attitude from one member toward another. Each member shall understand that every reasonable effort will be made to assist a disturbed member or members. The Pastor, other members of the church staff, the deacons, and other church members stand ready to counsel a fellow church member.

When a serious condition or situation exists that would cause a member to become a detriment to the harmony and function of the church in carrying out its Christian commission, every reasonable effort for restoration shall be taken by the Pastor, the deacons, and any other member or group of members so designated to resolve the problem. Any such efforts must be in agreement with the teachings of Matthew 18:15-17 and shall be undertaken in a spirit of Christian love and patience. If, after all reasonable measures have been exhausted, it is apparent that the welfare of the church and its programs will best be served by excluding the member(s), the church may, after a season of prayer, take such action by a two-third's vote of the members present at a regular or called church conference.

Article II. Church Officers

Section 1. Pastor

- (1) Qualifications:

The Pastor's life and conduct shall reflect the teachings found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. He must also be ordained by this church or a Baptist church of like faith and order and he must conform to the principles of faith and practices of this church.

- (2) Duties and Privileges:

It shall be the responsibility of the pastor to lead the church membership in carrying out its commission as a New Testament church. The pastor shall lead the church staff, the various organizations within the church and the other members in the performances of their tasks. As administrator of pastoral ministries within the church, he shall lead the church membership to engage in the fellowship of worshipping, witnessing, ministering and educating, to proclaim the gospel to believers and non-believers, and to see and respond to the needs of the church members and other members of the community. The pastor shall preside at all church conferences of the church. In the pastor's absence, the Chairman of the deacons shall preside. In his absence a designated staff member or deacon shall preside. The pastor shall be an ex officio member of all standing committees of the church.

- (3) Method of Calling:

When the office of Pastor becomes vacant, a Pastor Search Committee will be elected by the church to find, interview, and recommend to the church for its vote, a new Pastor. This committee will consist of seven resident church members and two alternates who are resident church members. In order to elect this committee, announcements will be made in all worship services and publications for two weeks preceding election Sunday. On election Sunday, each church

member may submit up to five names on a secret ballot. The deacons will total the ballots and contact the people with the most votes to determine if they will serve. The seven people who receive the most votes and agree to serve will become the Pastor Search Committee. The next two highest vote recipients who agree to serve will be the alternates. The committee will elect its own chairman. The expenses of the committee will be paid by the church.

The Pastor Search Committee will nominate an interim Pastor who will not be considered for Pastor. A seventy-five percent majority positive vote of those present in a church conference will constitute a call to the interim Pastor. The Church Council will be responsible for filling the pulpit until an interim pastor is called.

When the Pastor Search Committee has selected its nominee as a prospective pastor, the church membership will shall be notified by announcements in all worship services and publications one week prior to the scheduled vote. On the designated Sunday, at the close of each morning worship service, the Chairman of the Pastor Search Committee shall present the recommendation before the church. A vote by ballot shall be taken and the deacons shall count the votes. A ninety-percent or greater positive vote will constitute a call to the new Pastor. If, for any reason, a call is not extended by the church to the person recommended by the Pastor Search Committee, or if a call is declined by the nominee, the committee shall begin its work anew and come to the church in the same manner prescribed above and present a second recommendation. This method shall be employed until a pastor has been called by the church.

(4) Tenure:

The Pastor shall serve at the pleasure of the church with the privilege of resigning at any time.

(5) Removal From Office:

If a serious issue or issues arise which call into question the fitness of the Pastor to continue serving as Pastor, the deacons shall call a meeting of the Diaconate, the Fellowship of Deacons and the Personnel Committee. When a quorum of the Diaconate is declared, the meeting shall be called to order and the issues(s) concerning the Pastor's fitness to serve will be discussed. If the Diaconate, and the Personnel Committee (excluding the pastor) determines by a majority vote that the Pastor is unfit to continue serving as Pastor, the matter will be brought before the Church in a regular or special business meeting of the Church. A minimum of 7 days written notice will be give to the church and the Pastor prior to the meeting. In the business meeting, after review of the situation and after the Pastor has had an opportunity to address the members, a vote will be taken. A majority vote to remove the Pastor will result in his immediate removal as Pastor.

Section 2. Church Staff

The church shall call or employ such staff members as the church determines necessary. Their duties shall be stated in job descriptions formulated by the Personnel Committee who may use the advice and recommendations of leadership within the church. The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for screening, selecting, and recommending to the church the employment and termination of such staff members as Associate/Assistant Pastor, Minister of Education, Minister of Music, Minister to Children, Minister to Youth, Office Manager, Financial Secretary, full and part-time secretaries, and instrumentalists. The Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Finance Committee, will recommend salaries and benefits to the church for these employees.

Section 3. Deacons

(1) Office

The office of a deacon shall be recognized as a higher calling that has the recognition and honor of being committed as a servant and not of holding a position. Consistent with the New Testament, its purpose is to aid the pastor, minister to the membership, and lead the congregation in carrying out the Christian commission of a New Testament church. The deacon body is not a governing or ruling board in the Church.

(2) Qualifications

Each man serving as a deacon shall possess the qualifications of a Christian as set forth in the New Testament. The deacon's life and conduct shall be in harmony with the special requirements as described in 1 Timothy 3: 8-13 and Acts 6: 1-6. Any man twenty-one years of age or older may be considered as a candidate for deacon if he has been a church member for at least the previous six months. A man selected to be a deacon may not serve as a deacon until he has been ordained in this church or in another Baptist church of like faith and order.

(3) Nomination and Selection of Deacons

In September of each year, the deacons shall compile a list of prospective deacon candidates. The list shall consist of all male members of the church who are at least twenty-one years old, have been members of the church for at least six months and who are not currently serving in the active deacon body. After two weeks of announcements in church worship services and in the bulletin, an election for nomination of deacons will be held on one of the first two Sunday's in October. Each church member may select for nomination as deacons as many as they feel lead by the Holy Spirit. Voting by absentee ballot is allowed for members who can not attend the voting. The active deacons will count the ballots and, after consultation with the pastor, will contact, question and interview the men with the highest vote totals. The active deacons will work with the pastor to evaluate the service needs of the church for the following year and will determine the number of men who are needed as new deacons. At a church conference in December, the deacons will recommend the new deacons for a vote by the church. If, at any time the active deacons determine that more deacons are necessary for them to properly fulfill their role in the church, they may announce to the church at any church conference that vacancies exist and that the nomination/interview/election process as described above will be used to fill the vacancies. In this instance it will not be necessary to wait until September to compile a list of prospects, to vote in October, and to bring the nominations before the church for a vote in December.

(4) Term

An active deacon shall be elected to serve a term of office of three years. Following his term of office, a deacon moves to inactive status and remains so until reelected in the manner described above. All deacons are encouraged, but are not required, to remain on inactive status for a year before accepting reelection.

(5) Fellowship of Deacons

The Fellowship of Deacons is the body of men who have been ordained as deacons in the church or in a Baptist church of like faith and order who are voting members of the Church. This includes the inactive deacons. Inactive deacons are invited to attend deacon meetings, to assist in the serving of the ordinances, and to participate in the other ministries of a deacon.

(6) The Diaconate

The diaconate is the body of active deacons affirmed by the Church to the servants to the Church. It consists of the active deacons who are serving in an elected three-year term of office.

(5) Inactive Deacons

All inactive deacons, as well as deacons who are members of the church who were ordained in another Baptist church of like faith and order, are invited to attend deacon meetings, to assist in the serving of the ordinances, and to participate in the other ministries of a deacon.

(6) Meetings, Quorum, Vote and Recommendation

The deacons shall meet in regular session once a month. Called meetings may be held when the pastor or chairman of the deacons determines their necessity. A quorum shall exist when fifty percent or more of the active deacon body is

present at a regular or called meeting. A recommendation shall be considered approved when a majority of a quorum vote is in favor of it. No action of the deacon body is binding on the church unless authority has been previously given it by a majority vote in a church conference or unless assigned by this constitution. The deacons shall keep minutes of their own meetings.

(7) Deacon Officers

The active deacons shall elect their own officers from the body of active deacons. The officer positions are: 1. Chairman of the Deacons, 2. Vice-chairman of the Deacons, 3. Secretary.

Section 4. Church Clerk

The church-elected clerk shall be responsible for the keeping of accurate records of all official church business. These records shall become church property and will be made available upon request to all members. The church may however delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to the church secretary. The clerk shall keep an accurate and up-to-date register of the church member's baptisms, deaths, and admission to or dismissal from the church. The clerk shall also issue letters of transfer for members joining other Southern Baptist churches.

Section 5. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for keeping accurate and up-to-date records of all money received by the church. Donors shall be given proper credit for their gifts. The Financial Secretary shall be responsible for preparing and distributing annual records of contributions to all members and other identified contributors. The Financial Secretary shall work closely with the Finance Committee to pay invoices, handle transfers of funds, and process requests for funds.

Section 6. Trustees

The trustees will be elected by the church and shall have no authority other than that authorized by action of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action.

The duties of the trustees shall be the execution of legal documents pertaining to real property of the church including but not limited to notes, deeds of trust, and guarantees. To be legally binding, all actions taken will require the signature of two trustees unless additional signatures are required in the resolution authorizing the action.

The number of trustees shall be no fewer than three and no more than five. Permanent, temporary, part-time, or interim church staff shall not serve as trustees.

Article III. Church Council

The Church Council is composed of the pastor, all other ministerial staff, and the chairperson of each committee. The pastor is its chairman. If he is unable to attend a meeting, another member of that council may represent the council. All Church Council meetings are "open door" meetings. Any interested church member may attend and participate in Church Council meetings. The Church Council is responsible for coordinating and evaluating the programs of the church. It is to recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to church program priorities. If the church has not already authorized a matter that is voted upon by the council, it shall be brought to the church conference for approval.

Matters to be brought before the Church for a vote should be presented to the Church Council for discussion prior to the quarterly business meeting so that the appropriate committees and staff can discuss the issue. The purpose of this

presentation to the Church Council is not to have the matter approved or rejected by the Church council but to simply coordinate Church resources and calendars.

Article IV. Committees

This church has established that standing committees must function within themselves. The church shall elect all members and chairmen of standing committees. A committee member must be a member of the church and may not serve on more than two standing committees at one time. When vacancies occur on any standing committee, the Committee on Committees shall nominate another member of the church to fill the position. The term of service on a committee is three years. At the time of a person's nomination and election, the Committee on Committees may nominate that person for a shorter term in order to synchronize the expiration of terms of service. The church may vote in any church conference to establish any new temporary or standing committee.

The Finance and Personnel committees will have an odd number of members.

Only one member of an immediate family, (Spouse, child, parent, sibling, in-law) may serve on the same committee for the following five committees; Pastor Search, Personnel, Finance, Teller and the Committee on Committees. Upon the adoption of this Constitution, if any individuals are affected by this rule, they will continue to serve until the scheduled expiration of their time on the committee.

The following are the church's policy committees. Once formed, they are to elect their own officers.

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Finance Committee: Prepare the church's annual budget, report on the church's finances at each regular church conference, and maintain day to day control of all church expenditures.

Personnel Committee: Recruit and interview prospective church employees (except for the pastor). Recommend these prospective employees to the church for employment. Develop and recommend to the church employee job descriptions and salary packages. In extreme situations and while consulting with the pastor, terminate the employment of a church employee (except for the pastor). The Personnel Committee, in consultation with the pastor, shall provide a confidential job performance evaluation annually for each church employee.

Committee on Committees: Recruit and nominate members to serve on all standing committees.

Article V. Policies and Procedures

Matthew Road Baptist Church adopts policies and procedures that contain provisions for the regulation and management of this church. They are to be consistent with the law, the Articles of Incorporation, these bylaws, and this constitution.

Article VI. Precedence of this Constitution

Upon adoption of this constitution and these bylaws by Matthew Road Baptist Church of Grand Prairie, Texas, all previous actions of this church which conflict with this instrument shall be null and void. In the event of conflict in meaning between this instrument and any further action of the church, the meaning herein shall take precedence over any other action or meaning.

Article VII. Amendments

This constitution and these bylaws may be amended by a two-third's vote of the church members present at any church conference. Notice of the date and time of a church conference at which a proposed amendment will be considered shall be given to the members at least seven days prior to the church conference and shall contain the text of the proposed amendment.

Amendment 1 to the by-laws effective October 23, 2005:

No member of the Finance Committee may serve as an ad hoc member for the Personnel Committee for the addition of staff.

Amendment 2 to the by-laws effective October 23, 2005:

Personnel Committee will consult with the Finance Committee prior to presenting to the church any personnel changes that impact the budget.

Amendment 3 to the by-laws effective October 25, 2009:

Each church member may select for nomination as deacons as many as they feel lead by the Holy Spirit.

Amendment 3 and 5???

Amendment 6, Effective July 28, 2013 for Article II, Section 3, Paragraph (3)

Replace Article II, Section 3, Paragraph (3) with the following:

(3) Nomination and Selection of Deacons: Each year the deacons shall compile a list of prospective candidates. The list shall consist of all male members of the church who are at least twenty-one years old, have been a member of the church for at least six months and will not be in the active deacon body as of January 1 of the following year. After two weeks of announcements in church worship services and in the bulletin, an election for nomination of deacons will be held. Each church member may select for nomination as deacons as many as they feel led by the Holy Spirit. Voting by absentee ballot is allowed for members who cannot attend the voting. The active deacon will count the ballots and, after consulting with the pastor, will contact, question and interview qualified men with the highest vote totals. The active deacons will work with the pastor to evaluate the service needs of the church for the following year and will determine the number of men who are needed as new deacons. At a church conference, the deacons will recommend the new deacons for a vote by the church.

Amendment 7, Effective July 28, 2013 for Article II, Section 3, Paragraph (4)

Replace Article II, Section 3, Paragraph (4) with the following:

(4) Term: An active deacon shall be elected to serve a term of office of three years. Following his term of office, a deacon moves to inactive status and remains so until reelected in the manner described above.

