

By-Laws
of the
Fellowship Baptist Church of Tarrant County
Saginaw, Texas

Preamble

Fellowship Baptist Church of Saginaw (hereafter "Church"), Tarrant County, Texas is an autonomous Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains to itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this Church.

ARTICLE I – Membership

Section 1: Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this Church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of salvation, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her salvation, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must affirm the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith. The Elders shall be responsible for evaluating each person's qualification for membership.

Section 2: Admission of Members

Having affirmed a person's salvation, baptism, and Christian walk, applicants shall be recommended by the Elders for admission and affirmed by the majority of the members at any members' meeting or regular public service and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3: Membership Status

A member in good standing shall be one who is making a reasonable effort to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and regularly participating in the life of the Church.

Section 4: Duties and Privileges of Membership

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, and material resources each has received from God. Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of each member to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote. At such a meeting, a member may only vote in person.

A member by written request, stating the purpose of the request, shall be entitled to examine and copy at the member's expense, in person or by agent, accountant, or attorney, at any reasonable time and for a proper purpose, the books and records of the Church.

Only members shall lead any ministry or hold any office of the Church.

Section 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 of the Elders and the discipline of the Church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline will be practiced after individual and private admonition has failed.

Church discipline may include admonition by the elders and congregation, removal from office, and excommunication.

The purpose of such discipline is:

- A. For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined;
- B. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them;
- C. For the purity of the Church as a whole;
- D. For the good of our corporate witness to non–Christians; and
- E. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting his holy character.

Section 6: Termination of Membership

The Church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her voluntary resignation or joining with another church. The Church has authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership if they are in the process of church discipline or for any other reason the Church deems necessary or prudent.

A member shall be removed from membership as a matter of church discipline upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of at least three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

ARTICLE II – Government and Officers

Section 1: Congregational Authority

The biblical offices in the Church are Elders (pastors, shepherds, overseers) and Deacons, but final authority is vested in the body of members who compose the Church as further defined in these By-Laws. The Church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body, but is associated with churches for purposes of fellowship, consultation, and cooperation. This and any other voluntary associations with other bodies shall not infringe on the rights of this Church.

Section 2: Elders, Pastors, Deacons

Elders shall be responsible for the general oversight of the Church (which includes ministry, resources, and facilities) and the teaching of members. Pastors shall be employees who are responsible for such things as discipleship, instruction, and oversight of various ministries in the Church. In accordance with 1 Timothy 2:12 and 3:2, women shall not serve as elders. Deacons shall be responsible for serving members.

A. Elders

1. **Number and Term** – The Elders shall be composed of men who meet the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Lay elders shall be affirmed by vote of the members to a three-year term, and after serving a full three-year term shall be eligible for nomination and reaffirmation unless the elder no longer meets the criteria set forth in Scripture. After having served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of Elder after a sabbatical of at least one year.
2. **Nomination and Election** – Elders shall be elected as follows: The Elders shall at any regular members' meeting present to the members a list of nominees for the office of elder. For a period of at least one month, the members shall consider whether such nominees are qualified for the office. If any member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified, that member shall express such concerns to the elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove the name(s) from the list of nominees. No name shall be added to the list of nominees which was not included in the initial list. When a period of one month has elapsed, the Elders shall at the next regular members' meeting present a final list of nominees to the members, who shall vote on each of the nominees in turn. Any nominee having the approval of at least three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the members present shall be affirmed as an elder. The newly affirmed elder(s) will be publicly recognized and set apart as such by the other elders at a regular worship service.
3. **Responsibilities** – Elders shall, in keeping with the principles set forth in the Scriptures, especially Acts 6:1-6, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17, Titus 1:5-9, James 5:14, and 1 Peter 5:1-4, undertake the shepherding of God's flock (Acts 20:28) by devoting themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. The responsibility to shepherd entails the following oversight: Know, Feed, Lead, and Protect.

Know: Elders will make every effort to know the church by:

- a) Regularly contacting and communicating with members.
- b) Faithfully praying for the members.
- c) Coordinating the assistance for practical needs among the members.
- d) Meeting with and instructing prospective members.

Feed: Elders will seek to feed the church by:

- a) Teaching sound doctrine (Titus 1:9).
- b) Refuting and correcting error (Titus 1:9).
- c) Equipping members to do the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12).
- d) Discipling members for growth and service (2 Tim. 2:2).

Lead: Elders will steward the resources, ministries, and opportunities of the Church by:

- a) Planning and overseeing the worship services.
- b) Overseeing the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- c) Examining and recommending candidates for all offices and leadership positions.
- d) Overseeing the work of the deacons and all other agents of the Church.
- e) Coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church.
- f) Mobilizing the church for world missions.

Protect: Elders will take every step to safeguard the health and unity of the church by:

- a) Protecting unity and watching for division (Titus 3:10, Eph. 4:1-2).
- b) Admonishing and correcting error (Titus 1:9).
- c) Overseeing the need and steps for church discipline (Matt. 18:15-17).
- d) Taking any other action which shall be necessary and proper for faithfully overseeing and shepherding the members.

As spiritual shepherds, the Elders are to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, affirm our fundamental convictions (Statement of Faith) and commitment to Scripture as our final authority.

- 4. **Removal** – An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express concern to the Elders and, if need be, to the members. Any such action shall be done according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Subsequent to the fulfillment of the process outlined in Scripture, any of the elders may be dismissed by a three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) vote of the congregation at any members' meeting of the Church.
- 5. **Regular Meetings** – Unless otherwise determined by the Chairman, a regular meeting of the Elders shall be held monthly on any day designated not less than seven (7) days in advance by the Chairman of the Elders.
- 6. **Special Meetings** – Special meetings of the Elders may be called by or at the request of the Chairman or any two (2) Elders.
- 7. **Quorum** – A majority of the Elders shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meetings, but if less than a majority of the Elders are present at the meeting, a majority of the Elders present may adjourn the meeting from time to time without further notice.
- 8. **Manner of Acting** – The Elders shall appoint a chairman and shall also appoint one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings.

B. Pastors

- 1. The Lead Pastor will be the main preaching pastor and responsible for leading in the development of the vision. The Lead Pastor is designated as an Elder.
- 2. Pastors shall be those men elected by the members and employed by the Church on a full or part-time basis in recognition of their call by God to lead and teach.

3. The Elders will be responsible to find candidates to fill pastoral roles as needed (including the Lead Pastor and any other positions deemed necessary by the Elders). After due process, an unanimous vote of the Elders shall be required to nominate a candidate for the pastorate to Church members.
4. The candidate will become a Pastor upon the approval of three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the members present at a duly called members' meeting as set forth in Article V.
5. Any Pastor's term of service will be open-ended until terminated by resignation or a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote at a duly called meeting of the Elders for that purpose. Any decision to affirm the termination shall be ratified by a three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) vote of the members present at a duly called members' meeting.

C. Deacons

1. **Number and Term** – There shall be a sufficient number of deacons to provide for the needs of the Church membership. They shall serve for a term of three (3) years, and be eligible for reelection.
2. **Nomination and Elections** - Deacons will be nominated by the members at a regular scheduled members' meeting. Elders shall evaluate if the candidate is qualified and able to serve as a deacon. If qualified, the Elders shall present a list of nominees for the office of deacon. For a period of at least one month, the members shall consider whether such nominees are qualified for the office. If any member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified, that member shall express such concerns to the elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove the name(s) from the list of nominees. No name shall be added to the list of nominees which was not included in the initial list. When a period of one month has elapsed, the Elders shall at the next regular members' meeting present a final list of nominees to the members, who shall vote on each nominee in turn. Any nominee having the approval of at least three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the members present shall be affirmed as a deacon.
3. **Qualification** - To be nominated and serve as a Deacon, he or she must:
 - a. meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8–13;
 - b. be willing to accept instruction, training, and oversight from the Elders.
4. **Responsibilities** – The Deacons will be servants of the Church under the authority of the Elders. The Elders will give them direction and areas of responsibility. These areas may include:
 - a. caring for the needs of the people; and
 - b. caring for the physical property of the Church.
5. **Removal; Vacancies** – Deacons may be removed from office for unbiblical conduct or abandonment of office as determined by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Elders present at a duly called meeting. In the event a Deacon is removed or resigns before his or her term expires, the Elders may, at the discretion of the Elders, nominate a qualified member to fill the vacancy. Such nominees shall be brought before the congregation pursuant to Section 2(C)(1) of this Article.

Section 3 – Officers

1. **Appointment and Removal** – The officers of the Church shall be its Trustees, Secretary and Treasurer, as the Elders shall from time to time appoint, and shall have the authority to perform the duties prescribed by the Elder Council. All officers of the Church shall be appointed by the Elders from among the members of the Church who are in good standing. One (1) person may hold two (2) or more offices and each officer

shall serve until his or her successor has been appointed, unless the officer is no longer a member, no longer a member in good standing, or it is in the best interests of the Church to remove the officer, as determined by the Elders, in which event the officer shall be removed from office immediately. The Elders shall appoint qualified members to fill any vacancies in the offices of the Church.

2. **Lead Pastor** – Candidates for the position of Lead Pastor shall receive a memorandum of engagement that sets forth the candidate's duties, responsibilities, range of benefits, and other material terms of employment. The memorandum of engagement shall first be approved by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the members of the Elders present at a duly called Elder meeting and then be made available to the members within a reasonable period of time before the members vote on the question of whether or not to employ the Lead Pastor. Subsequent modifications may be made in the memorandum of engagement by the Elders, provided that any material modifications shall be presented to the congregation in any congregational meeting. The material modifications shall be deemed approved by the congregation upon a vote of two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the members present at a duly called members' meeting.
3. **Trustee** – A minimum of two Trustees shall serve as legal representatives of the Church. Trustees will hold in trust the property of the Church. They have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the Church authorizing such action. Trustees will meet at least one time annually to review the status of church property, deeds, insurance, and legal papers, including Articles of Incorporation, and shall advise the Church of any necessary action. Trustees are responsible for securing a safe location, such as a safety deposit box or fire safe, for keeping important legal documents.
4. **Treasurer** – The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the Church, receive and give receipts for money due and payable to the Church from any source, and ensure that deposits of all such monies in the name of the Church are made in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as shall be determined by the Church. The Treasurer shall, in general, perform all the duties incident to the office of Treasurer, and such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the Elders. The Treasurer shall have oversight of all areas of the budget, including preparation and adherence. The Treasurer shall ensure that all non-budgeted expenditures are handled in accordance with Article VI, Section 2.
5. **Other Offices** – Other officers will be assigned ad-hoc, e.g. secretary.

ARTICLE III – Committees

Committees are defined as congregationally approved groups of members in good standing that assist in the administration of the Church. They are assigned to a particular administrative or planning task and may be a standing committee or only a temporary ad hoc committee.

Committee terms shall be on a three-year rotating basis unless stated otherwise. All committee members will be recommended by the Elders and affirmed by the members. If necessary, a standing committee member may serve under provisional status until the next members' meeting when they can receive member affirmation. However, all ad hoc committee members should be affirmed before beginning their function. The Lead Pastor will be an ex officio member of each committee along with no more than one (1) other Elder. Ex officio members shall retain their voting rights.

Standing Committees - the following committees shall be established and remain functioning committees to help administer the organization:

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall help oversee the finances of the Church. The Treasurer will be an ex officio member of the Finance Committee. The committee will consist of no less than three (3), but no more than five (5) active members approved by the members at a duly called members' meeting.

The Finance Committee shall:

1. Elect from the non ex officio members a chairperson;
2. Approve all individuals involved in the process of receiving, counting and depositing collections made by the Church and shall establish procedures regarding the same;
3. Provide guidance in cooperation with the Elders, Deacons, and other ministry leaders during the budget preparation process, and approve the budget to be presented to the membership for adoption;
4. Approve any budgeted expenditures above \$10,000; and
5. Approve any unbudgeted expenditures above \$10,000. This approval does not supersede the need to present such items at a duly called members' meeting.

Ad Hoc Committees – as specific needs arise in the Church, the Elders may identify the need to form a committee to address that need (facilities et al.). Such committees can be formed at any time, subject to the approval of the membership at a duly called Members Meeting. Ad hoc committees should have a specific purpose and a term of less than one year. Should the committee need to exist beyond one year, it may be re-authorized at a duly called members' meeting.

ARTICLE IV - Ordinances

This Church will practice two ordinances commissioned by Jesus Christ: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both are symbolic celebrations of His death and resurrection as well as our new life in Him.

Section 1 – Baptism

Baptism will be offered to anyone who wishes to publicly profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They should first meet with an Elder or pastoral staff member to discuss their conversion experience and ensure they understand the Gospel and the meaning of baptism. Assuming there is sufficient understanding, a baptismal service will be scheduled as quickly as possible, either during an already scheduled worship service or at a special service in an agreed upon location. All baptisms will be done by immersion, except if doing so would endanger the health of the individual.

Section 2 - Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper, or Communion, should be observed regularly, no less than quarterly, at the direction of the Elders. The Lord's Supper will be open to anyone who has made a public profession of faith in Christ. In any corporate worship venue, the ordinance should be led by an Elder or Ministerial Staff Member. The distribution and specific method of taking the bread and juice are up to the one leading the ordinance.

ARTICLE V – Members' Meetings

Church business may be conducted any time the Church meets as stipulated below. The teaching of the Word of God shall govern the conduct of business in all sessions. Where the Bible is silent, Robert's Rules of Order shall be the guide.

Section 1 – Quarterly Members' Meetings

Members' meetings should be held once per calendar quarter, with the final meeting of the year having as an agenda item the Financial Budget for the next calendar year. The election of Elders and Deacons should occur at a regularly scheduled members' meeting.

Section 2 – Special Members' Meetings

Special members' meetings may be called by the Elders at any time, with notification at least one (1) week prior to the date of the meeting. The notification shall be issued in the same manner it would be issued for the quarterly members' meeting.

Section 3 – Ad Hoc Members' Meetings

Ad hoc members' meetings for the sole purpose of voting new members into the church may be convened during any regular church service without prior notification.

Section 4 – Eligible Voters

Eligible voters shall be members in good standing and shall be eighteen (18) years or older.

Section 5 – Quorums

A quorum shall be the members present at a duly called members' meeting.

Section 6 – Notification

Official announcements will be made using one (1) or more of the Church's current general communication methods on at least one (1) Sunday prior to the date of the meeting and in addition, the date must appear in the Sunday bulletin and the Church website for at least one (1) Sunday prior to the date of the meeting.

ARTICLE VI – Finances

Section 1 – Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall be January 1st through December 31st.

Section 2 – Disbursements

1. **Routine Disbursements.** All monies shall be disbursed by check, except amounts of fifty dollars (\$50) or less, which may be paid out of a petty cash fund accounted for by vouchers.
2. **Non-emergency expenditures.** Items over two thousand dollars (\$2,000) not covered by the budget shall be approved by a majority of the voting members present during a duly called members' meeting.
3. **Emergency expenditures.** Items requiring expenditures more than two thousand dollars (\$2,000) not covered by the budget shall be approved by a majority vote of the Elders present at a duly called Elders meeting. Notification and explanation of such expenditures must be given at the next members' meeting.

Section 3 – Funds

1. All regular funds for the Church shall be primarily raised by voluntary tithes and offerings. Grants or bequests may also be received from time to time and are subject to the acceptance of the Elders.
2. Any special accounts requiring funding by loans, mortgages, or bonds must be approved by a vote of the church in a members' meeting specifically called for that purpose.
3. The church will maintain its accounting records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and best practices for non-profit accounting.

Section 4 – Allocation of Funds

The Church will designate not less than ten percent (10%) of its general fund giving for benevolent and missionary work. This statement will encourage and not limit giving away much higher percentages but will require a minimum allocation regardless of other financial constraints.

Section 5 – Budgeted Staff Positions

The Church may only hire staff to the extent its budget includes funds for such a position. Staff positions which are provided for in the budget, will be recruited and approved by the appropriate person(s) on staff. When appropriate and budgeted, the Elders can hire qualified individuals to provide additional pastoral care and assistance in the work of the ministry.

ARTICLE VII - Amendments

This constitution and by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.