

# FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

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# **FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION**

## **PREAMBLE**

We the membership of Faith Baptist Church of Visalia, California, desire to establish ourselves in the Word of God for Christ centered loyalty, ongoing spiritual growth, and Christlike love and service within our church membership and also to our community. We also desire to engage in maximum harmony in all administrative procedures and church endeavors. Therefore we do hereby adopt and set in operation this Constitution and Bylaws. This Constitution and Bylaws, as adopted on January 31, 2016 supersedes and cancels all other Constitution and Bylaws, and Amendments.

## **ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this organization shall be Faith Baptist Church of Visalia.

## **ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

Our purpose is to glorify God by conducting a Baptist Church in accordance with the Word of God. In order to accomplish this goal, we will promote the worship of our God; edify believers; teach the whole counsel of God; administer the ordinances and Biblical discipline; evangelize the community through personal witnessing and the preaching of the Gospel; carry on a vigorous missionary program around the world; establish other Baptist churches; defend the faith; maintain a good testimony for Christ by godliness and good works; and promote united prayer and the fellowship of true believers.

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501c (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law).

## **ARTICLE III - ASSOCIATIONS**

This shall be an independent Baptist Church, maintaining fellowship and cooperation with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches and the California Association of Regular Baptist Churches as it deems consistent with the faith and policy of the church.

## **ARTICLE IV - STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Statement of Faith shall determine the doctrinal position of the church and is by reference made a part of the Constitution. Further, all policies and procedures outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws; the application of these policies and procedures in all church programs and ministries; the behavior and duties of all church staff, committees, and volunteers acting on behalf of the church; and the utilization of all church properties, including facilities; shall remain consistent with all aspects of the Faith Baptist Church Statement of Faith.

## **ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in this church shall include only those who:

- A. Profess faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.
- B. Obey Him in the matter of believer's baptism by immersion.
- C. Subscribe to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Articles of Faith of this church.
- D. Have been recommended for acceptance into the membership of the church after satisfactory examination by the Deacons.
- E. Have been accepted into the membership by a majority vote of the members who are present and voting.

## **ARTICLE VI - DISCIPLINE**

The Pastor(s) and Deacons shall constitute the Discipline Committee of the church (see Bylaws, Section 4).

## **ARTICLE VII - CHURCH OFFICERS**

The Officers of the church shall involve those of Pastor and Deacons (which are the Scriptural officers as set forth in 1 Timothy 3), and other such officers as set forth in the Bylaws. Workers deemed necessary will be appointed and/or approved by the Deacons.

## **ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES**

**Section 1 - Standing Committees of the church shall include:**

- A. Building and Grounds Committee
- B. Worship Committee
- C. Evangelism Committee
- D. Christian Education Committee
- E. Missions Committee

**Section 2 - Pulpit / Pastor Search Committee**

The committee shall consist of at least five members, including at least one Deacon and the Senior Pastor (unless that position is vacant) nominated by the Deacons and elected by the church with a majority vote, a quorum not required, when the Senior Pastor or an Associate Pastor position becomes vacant.

### **Section 3 - Nominating Committee**

The committee shall consist of five members, including at least two Deacons and a Pastor, nominated by the Deacons and elected by the church with a majority vote, a quorum not required, two months prior to the Annual Administrative Meeting. The committee shall prepare a ballot which shall be distributed to the membership at least two weeks prior to the election. No member of the committee will be placed on the ballot.

### **Section 4 - Additional Committees**

Any other committees to be formed, will be appointed by the Deacons as deemed necessary.

## **ARTICLE IX - MEETINGS**

In addition to weekly Sunday services, the church may schedule other services as it deems appropriate and it shall hold an Annual Administrative Meeting and Special Administrative Meetings as prescribed in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE X - INCORPORATION**

This church shall be a membership (non-profit) corporation, incorporated under the laws of the State of California.

## **ARTICLE XI - DISSOLUTION**

This church shall have the right to own, buy, or sell tangible properties both real and personal in its name and through properly elected and instructed officers. No profit will ever accrue to the benefit of any person or persons from the assets, holding, or other transactions in which this corporation may become involved.

In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its tangible assets and holdings will be distributed to such other existing non-profit religious corporations as would be in full agreement with the letter and spirit of this Constitution. All decisions in this event would be made by the majority vote of the remaining members of this church.

## **ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the eligible voting members present at a Special Administrative Meeting providing:

- A. The proposed amendment, submitted in writing, has been offered at a prior Special Administrative Meeting of the church, held at least one month prior to the meeting of the church at which the vote will take place;

- B. The proposed amendment has been posted and read (or distributed) at least two (2) Sundays in the month prior to the meeting at which the vote will take place; and
- C. All other legal requirements of the State of California have been met.

# FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH BYLAWS

## ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1 - Admission of Members

- A. Candidates may be received into the membership of this church by:
  - 1. Letter from another church of like faith and practice.
  - 2. Upon profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and followed by believer's baptism by immersion.
  - 3. By restoration.
- B. Candidates must be examined by the Board of Deacons, be recommended to the church for membership, and be accepted by a majority vote of members present and voting. This action may take place at any Special Administrative Meeting, a quorum not required.

### Section 2 - Process

A person becomes a member of this church by the following process:

- A. Completing the required instruction for membership.
- B. Meeting with the Pastor and/or Deacons.
- C. Being recommended to the church for membership by the Pastor and Deacons, at least two weeks prior to a Special Administrative Meeting called for this purpose.
- D. Being voted into membership by a majority vote of members present and voting.
- E. By being extended the right hand of fellowship at a public service as soon as possible following their acceptance into membership.

### Section 3 - Responsibilities of Members

- A. Church Covenant

Each member in obedient love for his Lord enters into the following covenant with the other members of this church:

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

- We purpose therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to attend its services regularly, to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin; to give faithfully of time and talents in its activities; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.
- We also purpose to maintain family and private devotions; to train our children according to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all gossip, backbiting and unrighteous anger; to abstain from all forms of activity which dishonors our Lord Jesus Christ, causes stumbling to a fellow believer or hinders the winning of a soul to Christ; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause.
- We further purpose to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return; to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, to seek it without delay.
- We moreover purpose that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church of like faith or order where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. In the event there is no such church, we shall seek, with the Lord's help, to establish one."

#### B. Matters of Special Attention

As a part of this local church, each member is expected to give special attention to regular attendance and active participation in services and administrative meetings, consistent financial support, and use of his abilities and gifts in the work of the church.

#### C. Authority of Church Decisions

A member is also expected to recognize the authority of the membership in making decisions, which become the will of the church. Though he may hold private, contrary opinion, he is responsible to promote the unity of the church by upholding and supporting the church's decision, or seeking change through constitutional and ethical means, or withdrawing from the church quietly and peaceably without divisive activities.

### **Section 4 - Review by Deacons and Pastor**

It shall be the responsibility of the Pastors and Deacons to prayerfully review the membership at least once a year. The Deacons may recommend that indifferent and uninterested members be placed on an inactive list. They should counsel with members who seem to be delinquent in doctrine or practice. Their greatest concern should be to



seek to restore such members to a right relationship with the Lord and the church, and to assist them in again establishing a good testimony.

Those on the inactive list may not vote and will not count toward a quorum. Anyone remaining on the inactive list for 6 months may be removed from the membership by a simple majority vote at an Administrative Meeting.

A member who has been placed on the inactive list may be restored to active membership at any time by recommendation of the Deacons, with approval of the Senior Pastor, and by majority vote of members present and voting at a Special Administrative meeting.

## **Section 5 - Discipline of Members**

The New Testament recognizes several levels of church discipline. (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 3:11-15; Titus 3:10; 2 Timothy 2:14-18). Erring members shall be restored, if possible, according to Galatians 6:1.

Discipline shall be followed as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17. If these efforts fail, the erring member shall be subject to removal from the membership of the church. All such matters must be brought before the Pastor and Deacons for consideration prior to presentation to the church.

Any former member removed from church membership by church action but who wishes once again to become a member may apply for membership, by showing evidence of repentance, by confession, and renewed Christian living. They must be recommended by the Senior Pastor and Deacons, and be approved by majority vote of the members present at a Special Administrative Meeting, a quorum required. They are to be forgiven, comforted, and loved, "lest they be swallowed up with too much sorrow" (2 Corinthians 2:6-11).

## **Section 6 - Termination of Membership**

Termination of membership in Faith Baptist Church may occur in one of five ways:

- A. By letter of transfer to another Bible-believing Baptist Church of like faith and practice. The letter will be sent to the church of like faith and practice upon its request.
- B. By letter of commendation to any other church, upon request from that church.
- C. By removal from our membership upon personal request of the member.
- D. By church action, as described under Sections 4 and 5.
- E. By death.

## ARTICLE II - CHURCH STAFF

### Section 1 - Senior Pastor

#### A. His Qualifications:

The Senior Pastor shall meet all the Biblical qualifications found in Scripture. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

#### B. Duties and Authority (Acts 20:28)

- The Senior Pastor shall be overseer of the church in all its activities, focusing on his areas of strength and spiritual gifts, and delegating responsibilities as necessary to Associate Pastors, Deacons, and other qualified leaders within the church.
- The Senior Pastor shall preach the gospel regularly, administer the ordinances, and function as an ex-officio member of the Deacon Board. He will serve as an ex-officio member of departments and committees and/or delegate these responsibilities to deacons.
- The Senior Pastor will tenderly watch over the membership and spiritual interest of the church, as the chief under shepherd to the Lord Jesus Christ at Faith Baptist Church.
- The Senior Pastor will serve as the executive officer of all FBC staff, and oversee the administration of the church directly and/or through delegation and oversight, to the end that FBC will develop its strength for the best possible service to the church family and local community.

#### C. Call and Separation

The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite term, the relationship to be dissolved by mutual agreement, subject to either a minimum of four weeks notice of resignation or four weeks compensation on separation. The call or separation of the Pastor shall come before the church at a Special Administrative Meeting. Notice of this meeting and its purpose shall be given in writing to each member two weeks in advance, and it shall be read from the pulpit in all services on the Sunday preceding the called meeting. A 75% vote, a quorum being present, shall be necessary to call a Pastor. A 40% vote, a quorum being present, shall be necessary to dismiss a Pastor.

#### D. Compensation

The Senior Pastor's salary shall be taken care of by mutual agreement between the Pastor and the church (Philippians 4:10-18; 1 Timothy 5:17-18). The Pastor shall be entitled to an annual vacation to be worked out with the Deacons.

#### E. The Senior Pastor (and Associate Pastors) of FBC will not perform same gender weddings or any other weddings in contradiction to Scripture or the FBC Statement of Faith.

## **Section 2 - Associate Pastors**

- A. Associate Pastors shall be called upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor and the Board of Deacons to the church membership, as the need arises. The call of Associate Pastor will be in accordance with Article II, Section 1, C, above.
- B. Associate Pastors shall operate under the direction of the Senior Pastor. In the absence of the Senior Pastor, they shall work in coordination with the Board of Deacons until a new Senior Pastor is called.
- C. Compensation will be determined by the recommendation of the Deacons to the church membership.

## **Section 3 - Salaried Staff**

- A. All salaried staff shall be recommended by the Senior Pastor to the Board of Deacons for approval.
- B. Compensation shall be recommended by the Deacons and approved by the church membership.
- C. All staff are under the direction of the Senior Pastor.

## **ARTICLE III - CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **Section 1 - General Qualifications**

All officers of the church shall be of voting age and shall be active members of the church. All officers of auxiliary organizations shall also be active members of this church.

### **Section 2 - Term of Office**

The term of office shall be for one (1) year unless otherwise specified.

### **Section 3 - Deacons**

- A. Terms and Number

Deacons shall be elected by the church for a term of three years. Their number shall be determined by the church. (The church shall vote to increase or decrease the number of Deacons to minister to the church family as the need arises.) Deacons will be elected on a rotating basis, as much as possible, in order to maintain a carry-over of experienced men. There will be no limit to the number of terms a Deacon may be elected to serve.

## B. Qualifications

A Deacon shall maintain a radiant Christian testimony which is beyond reproach. A Deacon shall meet the qualifications as found in 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

## C. Duties

- Deacons shall be ministers to the church family. They shall assist the Pastor(s) with the day-to-day practical, physical, and spiritual needs of the church. They shall distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper. They shall be subject to the will of the church. They shall meet for prayer and necessary administration at least once a month. The Deacons shall choose from their members a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary. These shall be the officers of the corporation.
- They shall organize at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting. They shall have the power to fill vacancies on the Board until the next Annual Meeting.
- The Deacons shall annually appoint a Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Church Clerk, and approve appointments to other offices and committees.
- The Deacons will be the legal trustees of the property of the church. They shall have the liberty to approve expenditures not to exceed two percent of the annual budget without church action.
- A Deacon will serve on each of the standing committees.
- The Deacons will arrange for an annual financial audit of the church accounts at the end of each fiscal year and be responsible for the preparation of a budget to be presented and voted upon by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. The Deacons will be in charge of the Deacon's Fund.
- All monies received at church service offerings must be counted and recorded according to designations, by two active members of FBC, one of whom must be a deacon or active member appointed by the deacons for this purpose. All funds received with documentation will be handed to the Financial Secretary or placed in a locked file at the conclusion of the service.

## **Section 4 - Church Treasurer**

- A. The Church Treasurer, under the authority of the Deacon Board, serves as the chief financial officer of the church, and will meet regularly with the Deacon Board.
- B. The Treasurer will perform, or assign to a Deacon Board approved Accounting Agency with whom he will serve as the primary liaison, the following responsibilities:
  1. Keep an accurate record of all receipts (designated or otherwise) as reported by the Financial Secretary.

2. To pay all salaries and send all missions money as authorized by the church or as designated by the giver.
  3. To pay all bills and obligations as authorized by the church budget, or by church action, or by the Deacons.
  4. To keep an accurate record of all expenditures and prepare monthly, quarterly, and annual reports as requested by the Deacon Board.
- C. The Treasurer will oversee the performance of the Accounting Agency, assure that all financial records are maintained and accessible, including those necessary for annual audits, and make recommendations to the Deacon Board as necessary regarding the Agency.
- D. The Treasurer will deliver all current and precious records to their successor.

### **Section 5 - Financial Secretary**

- A. The Financial Secretary will receive all monies received in regular church offerings, confirm the tally of funds received from the counters, and resolve any discrepancies with the counters.
- B. Will record and deposit all money received by the church by the first working day of each week. A Board member may substitute for Financial Secretary.
- C. Will report the total giving (broken down according to budget items or special designations) to the Treasurer at least once each week.
- D. Will record the contributions of each giver weekly where the gift can be attributed to an individual or family.
- E. Will provide an annual statement for each giver, as identified in item D., for tax purposes. (These shall be available by the 4th Sunday of January.)
- F. Will deliver all current and previous records to his successor.

### **Section 6 - Church Clerk**

- A. The Church Clerk shall keep accurate minutes of proceedings at all church administrative meetings.
- B. Keep accurate records of church membership.
- C. Keep accurate records of the following events held at Faith Baptist Church — baptisms, marriages, births, child dedications, deaths, involving those attending Faith Baptist Church.

- D. Current Clerk records shall be in the possession of the Church Clerk. Clerk archives shall be kept in storage on the church property for up to 7 years. Older records should be disposed of properly in accordance with the Board of Deacons direction.
- E. Turn over all current records to any successor.

### **Section 7 - Additional Officers**

The Pastors and Deacons shall appoint qualified leaders to serve as Director of Sunday School, AWANA Commander, Director of Women's Ministries, Director of Men's Ministries, Director of Ushers and Greeters, and other such positions as the need arises.

### **Section 8 - Stipulations**

#### **A. Beliefs of Officers**

The church will not call anyone as Pastor, elect anyone to office or appoint anyone to teach who cannot fully subscribe to a personal belief in the doctrinal position of this church. Any Pastor, officer, or teacher of the church who changes his belief will turn in his resignation.

#### **B. Vacancies of Office**

Any vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the Deacons to serve until the next annual meeting at which time a new officer shall be elected to fill the unexpired term. Any member appointed or elected to fill an unexpired term is eligible to be elected to a full term in office.

## **ARTICLE IV - COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1 - Standing Committees**

#### **A. Christian Education Committee**

1. This committee shall include a member from the Deacons, the associate minister of youth, the Sunday School Director, AWANA Commander, and at least one member from the church at large.
2. They shall be responsible to coordinate all educational programs for efficiency, harmony, and purposes; secure personnel and provide training; evaluate and recommend any needed alterations in the programs.

#### **B. Mission Committee**

1. This committee shall include a member from the Deacons, and at least two members from the church at large.

2. They shall be responsible to:
  - a. Develop and keep updated the Missions Policy.
  - b. Review all annual reports of every supported missionary and provide recommendations to the Deacons for any changes in financial support.
  - c. Interview and recommend to the Deacons any candidate for church support.
  - d. Promote support of the church's missionary program.

C. Building and Grounds Committee

1. This committee shall include a Deacon who will determine the number and appoint the committee members.
2. They shall be responsible for the maintenance and operation of all the physical properties of the church.

D. Worship Committee

1. This committee shall include a Deacon, Worship Leader, (or the person appointed by the Deacons to conduct the service), the Director of Ushers and Greeters, and members at large.
2. They shall be responsible, in consultation with the Pastor, for the development, planning, and operation of the church's worship services.

E. Evangelism Committee

1. This committee shall include a Deacon and at least three members from the church at large.
2. They shall be responsible, in consultation with the Pastor, to develop and oversee the visitation program and formulate outreach efforts and programs.

F. Additional Committees

1. Additional committees, sub-committees, or ad hoc committees may be established as needed to enhance our various ministries.

## **ARTICLE V - ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND POLICIES**

### **Section 1 - Administrative Meetings**

- A. The Annual Administrative Meeting will be held in January, the date to be determined by the Deacons, for the purpose of reviewing reports, election of officers, approval of the annual budget, and other business as necessary.

## B. Special Administrative Meetings

1. Special Administrative Meetings may be called by the Senior Pastor or Deacons. Notice shall be given in a public meeting of the church at least two weeks in advance.
2. The Senior Pastor and Deacons shall call a Special Administrative Meeting if one is requested in writing by at least 15 voting members representing at least 5 unrelated families. The request must state the purpose in full and no other affairs can be transacted.
3. The Senior Pastor and Deacons may call for an Emergency Meeting of the church, requiring efforts to make immediate notification of church members through the telephone tree, etc.

C. The Pastor, an Associate Pastor, or a Deacon, will preside at all meetings.

## Section 2 - Conduct of Administrative Meetings

In the conduct of administrative meetings, rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all cases to which they apply. In exceptions, a majority vote shall establish the rule. Christian courtesy shall be shown in all deliberations and discussions.

## Section 3 - Quorum

A quorum will consist of not less than one-third of active, voting age, members, residing in Tulare, Fresno, and Kings Counties. A quorum shall be required for all transactions at the Annual Administrative Meeting or Special Administrative Meetings, unless stated otherwise in the Constitution or Bylaws.

## Section 4 - Voting

- A. All transactions of the church shall be approved by a majority of votes cast, unless stated otherwise in the Constitution or Bylaws.
- B. The election of officers shall be by ballot at the Annual Administrative Meeting. Secret ballots may be requested. All active members, 18 years of age and older, shall be privileged to vote on all matters.
- C. Absentee ballots shall only be allowed in the calling of a Pastor or Associate Pastor. The ballot must be presented Pastor (or Chairman of the Deacon Board if the Pastor position is vacant) in a sealed and signed envelope, no later than the Sunday prior to the Special Administrative Meeting.

## Section 5 - Policy on Board and Committee Meetings

All elected boards and appointed committees shall meet as often as is necessary to fulfill their responsibility and obligations to the ministry of the church.



## **Section 6 - Policy on Subsidiary Organizations**

The policy of the church shall be that all committee and Sunday School class officers, all voting committee members, and all teachers within the Christian Education ministry, shall be active members of this church, and shall have been for at least six (6) months, unless otherwise approved by the Senior Pastor and Deacons.

## **Section 7 - Policy on Involvement**

The policy of the church shall be that no organization or group within the church shall engage in any practice contrary to the church or Articles of Faith, and shall not participate with any group, activity, or institution which would minimize our Biblical position or embarrass the church in any way. The Deacon Board shall decide on such matters and take appropriate action.

## **ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the eligible voting members present at a Special Administrative Meeting of the church, providing:

- A. The proposed amendment has been offered at a prior Special Administrative Meeting of the church.
- B. The proposed amendment has been posted and read (or distributed) at least two (2) consecutive Sundays in the month prior to the vote.
- C. All other legal requirements of the State of California have been met.

## **ARTICLE VII - AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE AND THE FBC STATEMENT OF FAITH**

All church staff, officers, and committee members, shall agree with and abide with the FBC Statement of Faith. This applies to all church activities and facilities usage, as well as to personal lives and conduct. The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the final source of all that we believe.