

# **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF FAITH FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **PREAMBLE**

Humbly invoking the blessing of Almighty God and being mindful of the Biblical admonition to let all things be done decently and in order, we declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the church body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

### **ARTICLE I. NAME**

This body shall be known as the Faith Fellowship Baptist Church, Inc. of Denison, Texas, located at 4305 W. Crawford St., Denison, Texas, 75020, hereafter referred to as the Church.

### **ARTICLE II. NON-PROFIT STATUS**

The Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended, unless any law shall be repressive in scope and/or nature, that it is our duty to democratically oppose it on the basis of the right of free exercise of religious beliefs and peaceable assembly. The Church is formed for any lawful purpose or purposes under the laws of the State of Texas, including any purpose described by Section 2.002 of the Texas Business Organizations Code.

### **ARTICLE III. PURPOSE**

The focus and mission of this church is to be a God-centered fellowship committed to communicating the Good News and enabling believers to grow in their relationship to Jesus Christ.

### **ARTICLE IV. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

This body has adopted the Baptist Faith and Message Statement of 1963 as its statement of faith.

The Holy Bible is the authoritative Word of God, divinely inspired and is the basis of our statement of faith. This Church is committed, as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, to share the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Marriage is a biblical institution established by God as described by Scripture. We believe the biblical ideal for marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment. Accordingly, this church's pastors and staff will not officiate in same-sex unions or same-sex marriages, nor will its property or resources be used for such purposes.

### **ARTICLE V. POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute membership. All organizations created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable to the church. This church is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist

Churches. Faith Fellowship Baptist Church will voluntarily cooperate with and support the Grayson Baptist Association, Baptist General Convention of Texas, and Southern Baptist Convention, provided such cooperation does not conflict with the church's own best interests.

## **ARTICLE VI. CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of 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 will walk together in Christian love.
- We will show loving care for one another and encourage, counsel, and admonish one another.
- We will assemble faithfully for worship and fellowship, and will pray earnestly for others as well as for ourselves.
- We will endeavor to bring up those under our care "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
- We will seek, by Christian example and personal effort, to win others to Christ and to encourage their growth toward Christian maturity.
- We will share one another's joys and endeavor to bear one another's burdens and sorrows.
- We will oppose all conduct which compromises our Christian faith and will uphold high standards of Christian morality.
- We will prove the reality of our conversion by living godly, fruitful lives.
- We will maintain a faithful ministry of worship, witness, education, fellowship, and service.
- We will be faithful stewards of our resources and abilities in sharing the gospel with people of all nations.
- As a result of this covenant relationship, we will seek earnestly to live to the glory of God who brought us out of darkness into marvelous light.

As our declaration of faith, we believe the Bible is the authoritative Word of God, Divinely inspired. We believe in the Priesthood of the Believer, and the Autonomy of the local Church. We are committed to the Great Commission.

# **BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1 - GENERAL**

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

### **SECTION 2 - CANDIDACY**

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith and for baptism by immersion.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church of like faith and order.
3. By personal statement, satisfactory to the church, that the person comes from another Christian church and was baptized by immersion as a believer, trusting in the grace of God alone for salvation. Acceptance of a candidate for membership would be contingent upon recommendation by the pastor.
4. By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion when membership has lapsed, terminated, been lost, or when no letter is otherwise obtainable.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of those church members present (eligible to vote pursuant to Article I, Section 3 of these Bylaws) and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

### **SECTION 3 - RIGHTS OF MEMBERS**

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church at a regular or special business meeting, provided the member is present.

Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

### **SECTION 4 - TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death
2. Granting a letter to another Baptist church
3. Erasure by statement verbally to a deacon or staff member; by a written request; or proof of membership in a church of another denomination
4. Erasure by noncontact for 5 years
5. Exclusion by action of this church

### **SECTION 5 - WATCHCARE**

Those Christians who wish to enter into the love and fellowship of the church and will support the objectives of the church but cannot qualify, or choose not to qualify, for membership will be designated as coming under the "watchcare" of the church. These Christians are to be encompassed in all the life and love of the church, except for voting and for holding offices or positions of doctrinal and/or policy-making responsibilities.

## **SECTION 6 - DISCIPLINE**

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exist, which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure should be taken by the pastor and the deacons to resolve the problem. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. Should it be determined that the welfare of the church will be best served by the exclusion of a member, the church may exclude such member by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the voting members present at a properly called special business meeting called for this purpose.

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any reason, which has made it necessary for the church to exclude that person, may upon that person's request be restored to membership by a vote of the church upon evidence of that person's repentance and reformation.

## **ARTICLE II: CHURCH OFFICERS AND STAFF**

### **SECTION 1 - GENERAL**

All church officers must be members of the church. The officers of this church shall be the pastor (moderator), clerk, treasurer, deacons, and trustees. The staff of this church shall be those persons who serve this church, i.e., the Minister of Music, Minister of Education, Minister of Students, nursery, secretarial, and custodial employees. The person or persons serving as pastor, church treasurer, church clerk and the ministerial staff positions at the time these Constitution and Bylaws are adopted shall be considered as elected by the church pursuant to the appropriate provisions of these Bylaws.

### **SECTION 2 - PASTOR**

#### **A. Role of the Pastor**

The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament Church. The pastor will lead the church, the church officers, staff, and organizations to accomplish the mission of the church.

The pastor is the leader of the pastoral ministries of the church. As such, the pastor will work with the deacons and staff to:

1. Lead the church in worship, witness, education, fellowship, ministry, service, and application.
2. Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
3. Care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

The pastor must be an ordained minister. The pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs.

B. Pastor Search Committee

Upon the office of pastor becoming vacant, the Chairman of Deacons shall call a special called business meeting for the purpose of nominating a search committee. At the next regular business meeting, the church, by a majority vote of those voting members present, shall elect the members of the Pastor Search Committee, by written ballot.

The Pastor Search Committee shall seek out a suitable candidate for pastor. Any church member may make recommendations to the Pastor Search Committee. The Pastor Search Committee's recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one candidate at a time. The election shall take place at a church meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's notice to the church has been given. The election shall be by secret ballot and an affirmative vote of at least 85% of those voting members present shall be necessary to extend a call to a candidate for pastor. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.

C. Termination of Pastor

The pastor may be terminated by the church at a church meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks' notice to the church has been given. The vote shall be by secret ballot and an affirmative vote of three fourths (3/4) of the voting members present shall be necessary to terminate the pastor at which time the office of pastor shall be declared vacant.

A termination meeting may be called by a written petition signed by more than one fourth (1/4) of the resident voting members. The moderator for this termination meeting shall be the Chairman of Deacons. The pastor will not serve as the moderator for this meeting. In the event the pastor is terminated, termination will be immediate and the church may provide severance pay to the pastor of not more than one twelfth (1/12) of his total annual compensation, such severance pay being payable within thirty (30) days of termination. In the event the pastor is terminated for gross misconduct, as may be solely determined by the voting members of the church, then such severance pay shall be considered forfeited.

D. Pastor Resignation

If the pastor wishes to resign from his position at Faith Fellowship Baptist Church, it is requested he give at least two weeks' notice.

E. Supply and Selection of Interim Pastor

During such time as the church is without an elected pastor, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The Deacon Chairman shall be responsible for obtaining pulpit supply (person to fulfill the preaching ministry of the church).
2. The Pastor Search Committee may offer in nomination to the church a person to be named to the position of "interim pastor."

### **SECTION 3 - CHURCH STAFF**

This church shall call or employ only such staff members as the church shall need. When the need for a staff member is determined, the Deacon Body shall prepare a job description for each staff position. Upon recommendations by the Deacon Body, such staff positions will be created after being approved by the church. The staff shall operate under the supervision and auspices of the pastor. During any such time as the church is without a pastor, the Deacon Body shall designate a staff member to assume the personnel responsibilities ordinarily assumed by the pastor.

A. Ministerial Staff Positions

Ministerial staff members shall be employed by majority vote of those voting members present at a church meeting called for that purpose, upon recommendation of the Deacon Body and pastor. Ministerial staff positions may include but are not limited to Minister of Education, Minister of Music, Minister of Students, Associate Pastors, etc. These staff members may be terminated by a majority vote of the voting members present at a church meeting called for that purpose, upon recommendation by the Deacon Body and pastor, or upon presentation of a written petition signed by more than one fourth (1/4) of the resident voting members.

B. Non-Ministerial Staff Positions

Non-Ministerial Staff Members may be employed and terminated by the Deacon Body upon recommendation of the pastor. Non-Ministerial staff positions may include but are not limited to nursery, secretarial and custodial positions.

#### **SECTION 4 - MODERATOR**

The moderator shall be the pastor except when otherwise specified in these bylaws. In the absence of the Pastor, or upon request of the Pastor, the Deacon Chairman shall serve as the Moderator.

#### **SECTION 5 - CHURCH CLERK**

The church shall elect a clerk as its clerical officer. The clerk shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of each business meeting of the church; shall give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary as prescribed in these Bylaws; shall prepare the annual church letter to the association; shall keep a register of the names of members with dates of admission, baptism, dismissal, and death; shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church; shall preserve on file all official written communications and reports; shall perform any other duties assigned by the church. All records of the church are considered church property. The pastor, upon recommendation by the church clerk, may assign certain clerical duties of the church clerk to a non-ministerial staff member.

#### **SECTION 6 - CHURCH TREASURER**

The church shall elect a Church Treasurer as its Financial Officer. The Church Treasurer shall not be related to any staff member. The Church Treasurer shall be bonded, the church paying for a bond, a copy of which shall be filed with the church.

Church financial records shall generally be maintained to the maximum extent practical in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Segregation of financial duties to the maximum extent practical to ensure good internal control over church finances is an integral part of the accounting system. The Treasurer and Pastor jointly may assign clerical duties of the Treasurer to non-ministerial staff (or church member volunteer) to help ensure maximum safeguards of the church finances. The Finance Committee should

review the procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure such procedures are at all times adequate for the church size and growth.

The following finance functions are the overall responsibility of the Treasurer (or his/her delegates):

1. Deposit of all church receipts.
2. Payment of all authorized church expenses.
3. Maintenance of accounting records to support all receipts and disbursements.
4. Preparation of all financial reports.
5. Presentation of financial reports at regular business meetings for church approval.
6. Preservation of all financial reports and records as a part of the permanent church records.
7. Making all records available annually for audit.

## **SECTION 7 - DEACON BODY**

### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of the Deacon Body shall be to discharge faithfully the duties of deacons of a New Testament Church as set forth in Acts 6: 1-7, and I Timothy 3:8-13. In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. Their task is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing the pastoral ministries tasks of (1) leading the church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) caring for the church's members and other persons in the community.

### **B. Membership**

#### **1. The Deacon Body**

The Deacon Body shall consist of all deacons elected by Faith Fellowship Baptist Church. All members of the Deacon Body shall be members of Faith Fellowship Baptist Church. In case of death, resignation, reclassification, or termination, the church may elect a new deacon.

Each member of the Deacon Body shall serve unless one of the following occurs:

- a. Death
- b. Is no longer a member of Faith Fellowship Baptist Church
- c. Is classified as Reserve Deacon
- d. Is classified as Deacon Emeritus
- e. Is terminated by vote of the church
- f. Resignation

#### **2. Special Status**

##### **a. Reserve Deacons**

This group consists of those deacons who have been so classified at their own request because of work obligations or health considerations that make service on the Deacon Body impossible or impractical. This group also includes those deacons who have not met the service requirements of the Deacons. Reserve Deacons may, by invitation, attend Deacons Meeting and participate in discussions but shall have no vote and shall not be counted in establishing a quorum. They may

continue to assist in serving the ordinances and other Deacon Ministries whenever invited to do so.

b. Deacon Emeritus

Those deacons who have attained the age of seventy (70), having served on the Deacons for at least three (3) years, and having honored their office may be classified as Deacon Emeritus, at their request and upon approval of the Deacons. Their status in relation to meeting attendance, discussion, quorum, and vote is the same as for "Reserve Deacon."

c. Reinstatement of Deacons

A Reserve Deacon or Deacon Emeritus may be reinstated to the Deacon Body upon their request and upon favorable vote of the Deacons at a regular meeting.

C. Nomination and Election of Deacons

1. Deacon Election

a. The Deacon Body shall determine if additional Deacons are needed, and if so, the number needed. Upon making such determination, the Deacon Body shall recommend to the Church that a Deacon Election be held pursuant to the following provisions.

2. Once the Church approves a deacon election, the following steps shall be taken:

a. The Deacon Body shall select, interview, and receive permission to place in nomination a number of qualified nominees, if available, equal to twice the number of new deacons required. The Deacon Body shall determine if each individual meets the following qualifications:

- (i) That the candidate meets the scriptural qualifications of a deacon;
- (ii) That the candidate is sufficiently grounded in the doctrines of the Bible as accepted by this Church;
- (iii) That the candidate has been a member of this Church for at least one (1) year;
- (iv) That the candidate agrees to fulfill the responsibilities of the deacon as outlined by these Bylaws.

b. The Deacon Body shall then prepare in ballot form the list of nominees selected in the above-described manner. The Deacon Body shall then give the Church at least two (2) weeks' notice that a deacon election will be held at a special business meeting called for an upcoming Sunday morning worship service.

c. Voting members that are present at this special business meeting will be given a ballot and an opportunity to vote for one nominee for each new Deacon needed.

d. The Deacon Body shall count the ballots. The nominees (equal to the number of Deacons to be elected) who receive the most votes shall be considered as elected as Deacons.

D. Ordination of Deacons

All those elected to the Deacon Body who have not been previously ordained shall be ordained by the church. The Deacons and pastor shall plan and conduct the ordination service.

E. Responsibilities of the Deacons

1. Attendance

Each deacon shall be expected to be in attendance at each regular Deacons meeting. The Deacon may request to be excused from attending a meeting.

2. Ministry

- a. Each Deacon shall participate fully in any pastoral ministry program adopted by the Deacon Body.
- b. Each Deacon shall serve on committees as requested.
- c. Each Deacon shall support the various programs of the church.

3. Training

Each Deacon shall participate in the training programs established by the Deacon Body and pastor.

4. Discipline

Deacons who are unable to fulfill the responsibilities of ministry and training, shall request to be classified as a Reserve Deacon. Should a Deacon member fail to make such request, the Deacon Body, by majority vote, may classify the Deacon a Reserve Deacon.

F. Deacon Officers

The Deacon Body shall elect the following officers: Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary, for a 3 year term. The Deacon Body may elect other officers as they deem necessary. No Deacon officer shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in any one office.

G. Termination

The church may remove any Deacon from the Deacon Body by a majority vote of the voting members present at a special business meeting duly called, pursuant to the provisions of Article VI, Section 4 of these Bylaws.

**SECTION 8 - TRUSTEES**

A. Duties

Three (3) or more trustees, elected by the church, will serve as legal officers of the church. They shall hold in trust the church property and shall serve as directors of Faith Fellowship Baptist Church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents on behalf of Faith Fellowship Baptist Church involving the purchase, sale, mortgage, rental, or transfer of property, or to other legal documents where the signatures of trustees or directors are required.

B. Selection of Trustees

The Deacon Body shall place at an appropriately held church business meeting, names in nomination for office of Trustee.

Upon adoption of this Constitution and Bylaws, the current Trustees shall continue to serve in that capacity.

**ARTICLE III: COMMITTEES**

The committees of this church will consist of standing and non-standing committees. Standing committees shall be created to serve specific ongoing needs of the church. A standing committee may be dissolved by a majority vote of church members at a properly called business meeting when the church decides that its services are no longer warranted. A non-standing committee may be created by the church to serve a specific temporary need of the church. A non-standing committee shall be dissolved by a majority vote of church members at a properly called business meeting when the committee's original purpose has been accomplished. A list of all standing and non-standing committees shall be maintained by the church clerk.

Members of all church committees will be chosen from the membership of the church. No committee, standing or non-standing, shall consist of less than three (3) members. After serving a complete term, a committee member must rotate off the committee for one (1) year before being eligible for reelection to that committee. The Pastor and Chairman of Deacons will serve as ex officio on all committees and Ministry Teams. Ministry Teams are formed for specific ministry purposes within and/or as an outreach of the church. (i.e Pool team, Sound Team, "Operation Lighthouse" Apartment Ministry, etc.)

**ARTICLE IV: CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS**

The church shall maintain programs of Bible Teaching; church member training, church leader training, new member orientation; music; and missions and missions support. All organizations of the church shall be under church control, and shall report regularly to the church. The church shall elect annually from its membership persons to fill the various offices and places of leadership and instruction within the church organizations.

**ARTICLE V: CHURCH ORDINANCES**

**SECTION 1 - BAPTISM**

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- B. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.
- C. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whomever the church shall authorize.
- D. A person who professes Christ shall be baptized as soon as possible.

**SECTION 2 - THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church and other Christians, through partaking of bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ who died for our sins.

- A. The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly.
- B. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

**ARTICLE VI: CHURCH MEETINGS**

## **SECTION 1 - WORSHIP SERVICES**

The church shall meet regularly on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening for preaching, prayer, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God. The meetings will be open for the entire congregation and membership of the church, and for all people, and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor or as the church may direct.

## **SECTION 2 - SPECIAL SERVICES**

Revival services and any other meetings which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be placed on the church calendar as desired.

## **SECTION 3 - REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Regular business meetings shall be held monthly. An agenda may be established by the pastor and church staff. New items to be added to the agenda should be turned in to the pastor or church staff the Wednesday before the meeting. Parliamentary Procedure (Roberts Rules of Order) shall be used in business meetings.

## **SECTION 4 - SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Special business meetings may be called and held to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week notice to the church must be given concerning the subject, date, time, and location unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical or unless otherwise specified by these Bylaws.

## **SECTION 5 - QUORUM**

In all business meetings, the quorum shall consist of those voting church members present, provided it is a regular business meeting or a properly called special business meeting.

## **SECTION 6 - ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS, OFFICERS, ETC.**

Unless otherwise specified by these bylaws, all church officers, church committee members, trustees, officers of various places of leadership, etc., shall be elected by a majority vote of the voting members present at an appropriately held regular business or special business meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII: CHURCH FINANCES**

### **SECTION 1 - BUDGET**

The finance and stewardship committee shall annually prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by item the amount needed for all local and other expenses.

It is understood that membership in the church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular proportionate gifts. At least annually, each member shall be given an opportunity to indicate support of the church's unified budget.

### **SECTION 2 - HANDLING OF FUNDS**

The Treasurer shall account for all church receipts as set forth in Article II, Section 6 of these Bylaws.

Deposits of funds shall be made by the treasurer or appointed trustees of the church. Individuals selected for this duty by the Treasurer and Pastor jointly would normally be selected from the Counting or Finance Committee, provided they otherwise have no other access to church financial records, such as check signing, record keeping, etc.

All funds thus received will be subject to audit as set forth in Article II, Section 6 of these Bylaws.

### **SECTION 3 - FISCAL YEAR**

The church fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end December 31 of each year.

### **ARTICLE VIII: DISSOLUTION**

Upon discontinuance of this Church by dissolution or otherwise, any assets lawfully available for distribution are to be transferred to one or more organizations qualifying as an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, by a majority of members attending at a duly called business meeting.

### **ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS**

#### **SECTION 1**

The Constitution and these Bylaws may be amended, modified, or repealed only by two thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present at any duly convened business meeting of the church, provided the proposed amendment shall have been presented to the church in writing at any regular or duly called business meeting of the church at least thirty (30) days prior to the date established for voting on said amendment. The proposed amendment shall be printed and posted in the church office at least fifteen (15) days before the proposed amendment is to be acted upon. When an amendment is proposed and has been rejected by the church, that amendment, or any amendment embodying the substance thereof, shall not be proposed again for at least six months from the date of the rejection of such amendment.

#### **SECTION 2**

Any amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws shall immediately go into full force and effect from and after their adoption.

**Approved by Faith Fellowship Baptist Church, Inc.: November 26, 2017**