

**BYLAWS OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, INC.**

**ARTICLE I
IDENTIFICATION**

This congregation is incorporated as the First Baptist Church of Savannah, Georgia, Inc., doing business as First Baptist Church of Savannah. The congregation may affiliate itself with national, state, regional, and district Baptist bodies as it may find compatible with its faith and practice.

**ARTICLE II
PURPOSE**

The purpose of this organization is to worship within the fellowship of believers, to seek to know God through prayer and study of the Holy Bible, to minister in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to make known his name and will among all people.

**ARTICLE III
POLITY AND DOCTRINE**

The government of this church is vested solely in the body of the believers who compose it as an autonomous group. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical or civil body. This church accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as its sole authority on doctrine, and in matters of faith and practice.

**ARTICLE IV
RECEPTION AND DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS**

4.1. Upon approval of the church or its Diaconate, applicants are received or accepted by:

A. Faith. Any person publicly confessing personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and adopting the views of faith and practice held by the church, shall be admitted into the membership of the church, and be baptized. Baptism by immersion is the norm for this congregation.

B. Statement. Those who have been baptized and accepted into the membership of a Christian congregation, but who because of loss of records or similarly unavoidable circumstance have no letter of dismissal, shall be received into membership upon statement of their prior church affiliation.

C. Letter. Persons shall be received into membership by letter of recommendation from other Christian congregations.

4.2. The policy of this church is to remove names of members from the church roll and dismiss those persons from church fellowship only in the following manner:

- A. Death.
- B. Statement. A member making a written request for removal from the church rolls.
- C. Letter. Letters of recommendation for any member who is in good standing with the church shall be granted to any Christian congregation upon proper request for letter from said congregation and such members shall be removed from the church rolls.

4.3. There shall be two categories of church members: full membership and associate membership. Persons may join and be recognized as associate members, which shall allow such persons to be members of this church, while maintaining Christian church membership elsewhere. Applicants for associate membership shall meet the requirements set forth in Article 4.1 A, B or C above. An associate member shall have the same voting rights in the Church as a full member, but shall be ineligible to be elected as a deacon of this Church.

ARTICLE V DIVINE WORSHIP

The church gathers for worship and Bible study each Sunday, and for fellowship, enrichment, and business on Wednesday evening and at such other times as may be appropriate. The ordinances of the Lord's Supper and of Baptism are observed with such frequency as the church determines.

ARTICLE VI BUSINESS MEETINGS

6.1. The church shall hold regular business meetings of the members in January, April, July, and October of each year, for the purpose of hearing reports and considering such matters of business as may properly claim attention. Such meetings shall be held on the third Sunday of each such month, unless otherwise designated by the Diaconate. Special business meetings may be called by the pastor, the Diaconate, or by vote of the church. Business meetings may be adjourned to reconvene at any designated time. Written notice of each meeting date, time and agenda shall be given to the congregation at least one week in advance.

6.2. The Chair of the Diaconate, as moderator, presides at all business meetings of the church; in the event of the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair of the Diaconate, or a deacon appointed by the Diaconate shall preside. The norm for this congregation is to follow Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

ARTICLE VII FINANCIAL MATTERS

7.1. The financial needs of this church, its organizations, and causes fostered by it, are supported by tithes and gifts of money which are paid into and disbursed from the church treasury. Except for assets in the Church Endowment Fund which are managed by its Trustees, the Finance and Stewardship Committee serves as the custodian of all church funds, subject to applicable policies and procedures. The church operates on an annual budget,

approved by the church, and that budget controls all budgetary disbursements of monies from the treasury. The calendar year shall be the fiscal year.

7.2. Extraordinary disbursements must be authorized by the church. However, the Finance and Stewardship Committee has the authority to amend any item in the budget up to \$5,000, and the Diaconate has the authority to make such amendment up to \$10,000. No debt, commitment, or other obligation shall be created except by specific authority of the church. Proposals for raising special funds by organizations within the church shall be authorized by the Finance and Stewardship Committee with concurrence of the Diaconate.

7.3. The Finance and Stewardship Committee shall confer with committee and task force chairs regarding financial needs of each committee and task force by August 15th. By September 1st this committee shall have prepared a proposed budget for submission to the Diaconate at its September meeting and then to the congregation at its regular conference in October. The Diaconate shall give careful consideration to the proposed budget and make such changes as it may see fit before submitting it to the congregation. Prior to the conference, a summary of the proposed budget shall be sent to the members.

7.4. The Finance and Stewardship Committee shall be responsible for planning, leading, and evaluating the annual effort for the underwriting of the church budget, and other financial campaigns which may be carried on or directed by the church. It is expected that the budget will be underwritten or modified by November 15th. If the proposed budget is not fully underwritten by pledges and other projected receipts, the Finance and Stewardship Committee shall make appropriate modifications and present the modified budget to the Diaconate in January, and then to the congregation at the Annual Conference.

7.5 The Endowment Committee shall consist of those individuals who are chosen from time to time to serve as Trustees under the Church's Endowment Trust Fund. The Endowment Committee shall be responsible for management and disbursement of assets in such trust fund, in accordance with the terms of the Fund's trust agreement. The trustee members of the Endowment Committee shall be chosen in the manner as set forth in such agreement, rather than as set forth in Article VIII of these By-laws.

ARTICLE VIII OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

8.1. All ministers, officers, committee members and task force members shall be members of the church. The officers include the deacons and treasurer/clerk. As may be required, the Diaconate shall create salaried positions on the Church staff for the efficient operation of its program. Certain special functions of this church are performed through standing committees, task forces and ad hoc committees, each with definite duties and limitations as the church authorizes.

8.2. Ordained ministerial staff is called by the church and serve at its pleasure. The duties of each minister are outlined in that minister's job description and terms of call, and may be modified as agreed between the minister and the Diaconate. Upon termination of the term of a minister, a Search Committee and a Committee chair shall be recommended for approval by the church in conference by a group composed of the chair of the Diaconate, the vice-chair of the Diaconate (who also serves as chair of the church Nominating Committee),

the chair of the Finance and Stewardship Committee, the chair of the Personnel Committee and the chair of the Property Task Force with the chair of the Diaconate serving as a voting member and chair of the group. The Search Committee, including the chair, shall be composed of no fewer than five and no more than nine members, of whom no fewer than two shall be members of the Diaconate. The duties of the Search Committee shall be to recommend to the congregation the name of a minister whom it deems suitable to call, and make such other recommendations pertaining to the call as its judgment directs. The Search Committee shall be dissolved upon the official selection of a new minister.

8.3. The Treasurer/Clerk has fiscal responsibilities that may be assigned to him/her by the church or the Diaconate and has the responsibility for recording and preserving the minutes of all regular and called business meetings of the church.

8.4.1. The Diaconate consists of fifteen active deacons, and a maximum of five life deacons, all of whom are elected by the church. Active deacons serve for three years, or until their successors are elected. Five deacons are elected to three-year terms each year, replacing those who are retiring. No member of the Diaconate shall be eligible for re-election until one year has elapsed. Also, no one is considered for election for membership to the Diaconate who has not been a resident member of this church for at least one year. The Diaconate shall, by a majority vote, elect officers consisting of Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, for the following year from all deacons present at the December meeting.

8.4.2. The qualifications and duties of the Diaconate shall be those outlined in the New Testament. The Diaconate shall be responsible for all church business not requiring special action by the congregation. A Deacon shall promote peace, harmony, and a spirit of cooperation and understanding among the members, and shall be diligent in attendance at the services of the church. All church committees and task forces are responsible to the Diaconate, and each shall report their activities to the Diaconate periodically during the year. The Finance and Stewardship and Personnel Committees, and the Property Task Force shall report their affairs monthly to the Diaconate. The Diaconate shall appoint and remove church employees except ordained clergy, and shall direct such employees in any and all things. The Diaconate may delegate any of its personnel-related duties to the Personnel Committee.

8.4.3. The current and acting Chair of the Diaconate as Chief Executive Officer of First Baptist Church of Savannah, Inc. pursuant to and consistent with the Articles of Amendment of the Corporate Charter, effective September 5, 2014, shall sign, with the Secretary of the Diaconate as Secretary of the Corporation attesting thereto, contracts, deeds, promissory notes, mortgages, bonds, and all other legal or official documents authorized by the Diaconate and binding upon the corporation/church. The Vice-Chair of the Diaconate shall perform this function in the absence of the Chair.

8.4.4. By the September meeting of the Diaconate of each year, a committee composed of the chair of the Diaconate, the vice chair of the Diaconate, the chair of the Finance and Stewardship Committee, the chair of the Personnel Committee and the chair of the Property Task Force with the chair of the Diaconate serving as a voting member and the chair of such committee shall appoint a Diaconate Nominating Committee of five persons, two of whom shall be from the Diaconate with one of the Diaconate members serving as chair of the committee. The Diaconate Nominating Committee shall consider as nominees those persons who satisfy the *DEACON GUIDELINES* previously adopted by the

Congregation. The other members shall be as representative as possible of the congregation at large. Early in October this committee will make its report as to its nominees available for information to the Diaconate and the congregation for election. It is expected that the election of Deacons will take place at the quarterly conference in October of each year. Nominations may be made from the floor; however, no person may be nominated who has not agreed to serve if elected. The Diaconate shall be organized to begin its duties and functions on January 1st of each year.

8.5.1. Standing church committees shall carry out the policies of the church. These committees shall consist of an odd number of members, minimum of three and maximum of eleven. The size of each committee and the length of each committee member's term shall be determined by the Nominating Committee of the church, chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Diaconate. Terms are usually to be for three years, with a portion of each committee rotating off and on each year. When possible, the chair of each committee is to be a member serving the second or third year of a three-year term. A vice-chair is to be named from the new appointments, with the expectation that such person would become chair the following year. One of the ministers of the church and the Chair of the Diaconate shall be ex-officio members of all standing and special committees of the church and of the Diaconate.

8.5.2. Task Forces may be formed to perform ongoing tasks necessary in the life of the church but do not affect policies of the church. The Church Nominating Committee shall recommend chairs for each task force, to be elected at the October quarterly conference. Each task force chair is responsible for seeking members to serve on his/her task force.

8.5.3. The Nominating Committee shall present a completed slate of all committees, officers and task force chairs to the Diaconate for information at its October meeting, and then to the church for approval at the October quarterly conference. Thereafter, a listing of all committees and task force chairs shall appear in The Calendar. The term for all committees and task force chairs begins January 1st and runs through December 31st.

ARTICLE IX BYLAW AMENDMENTS

9.1. Any of these bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular church conference, provided such is proposed in writing at the preceding regular church conference, and notice is published in The Calendar prior to each such conference in which changes are to be considered.

9.2. The adoption of these bylaws shall effect a repeal of all previously adopted bylaws which are not re-adopted herein. However, previous bylaws, which were considerably more detailed may serve as clarification where not in conflict with this document.

9.3. Except as amended herein, the current Bylaws of First Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia, are reaffirmed, readopted and reddeclared in their entirety.

THESE BYLAWS ADOPTED BY THE CHURCH IN CONFERENCE ON October 21, 2018.