

The Constitution and By-laws of Southside Baptist Church
316 South Church Street
Spartanburg, SC 29306
Telephone: (864)582-2341

Constitution of Southside Baptist Church

Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the 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 its relationships to other churches, and its affiliation with the Spartanburg County Baptist Network, Inc., the South Carolina Baptist State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article I - Name and Purpose

Section 1. The Body shall be known as the Southside Baptist Church of Spartanburg, located at 316 South Church Street, Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Section 2. The purpose of this Church is to proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in accordance with the fundamental principles of a New Testament church. To carry out that purpose, the Church shall provide its members with opportunities for regular public worship services; for Christian fellowship, for Bible study and instruction in doctrine; and for uniting and coordinating their efforts in evangelism, missions, and benevolence. We shall strive as a Church to be Christlike in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

Section 3. This Church shall be incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of South Carolina governing religious bodies and shall exercise all the rights and privileges as outlined in Section 33-31-10 et. seq. of the South Carolina Code of Laws (1976 as amended).

Section 4. The official seal of the Church shall consist of the charter name of the Church, namely, "SOUTHSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH OF SPARTANBURG, S.C.", printed upon the circle of the seal and across its face shall be stamped the words: "Official Corporate Church Seal."

Article II - Statement of Faith

The Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the "Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Copies of the "Baptist Faith and Message" are available upon request in the church office or can be found online at bfm.sbc.net.

Article III - Statement of Mission

Southside Baptist Church exists to glorify God, connecting people to Jesus Christ in Spartanburg and around the world. We connect people to Jesus by:

1. Exalting God's greatness through worship
2. Evangelizing God's world through missions
3. Equipping God's people through discipleship
4. Encouraging God's family through fellowship
5. Expressing God's love through ministry

By-Laws of the Constitution of Southside Baptist Church

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.

The membership of this Church shall be all whose names are duly inscribed on the church rolls as maintained by the Church Clerk.

Section 2. **Admission of Members** - Any person who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and has taken Him as the Savior and Lord of his/her life may offer himself/herself as a candidate for membership in this Church in any one of the following ways:

- a. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
- b. By promise of a letter from a church of like faith and order.
- c. By a statement of prior conversion experience and prior baptism by immersion when no letter is obtainable.
- d. By statement of faith and for baptism according to the policies of the Church when a person has not been baptized by immersion.

Any such candidates shall be presented at any regular worship service and shall be admitted by a majority vote of members present. New members are encouraged to attend a New Member Class when scheduled.

Section 3. **Watchcare Membership** - A special membership of Southside Baptist Church will be afforded persons desiring such membership under the term "watchcare."

Watchcare association is for those of like faith who wish to be affiliated with the congregation while living temporarily in the Spartanburg area. "Watchcare" means they are calling on the spiritual resources of the Church while living in the Spartanburg area and intend to participate in its services and programs. Watchcare members enjoy all the privileges of church membership except the right to vote and serve on church Teams.

Section 4. **Termination of Membership** - Membership shall be terminated by death, transfer to another church, by written request of the individual member, or as provided by Section 5 which follows.

Section 5. **Discipline**

- (1) In the discipline of church members, the scriptural application of Matthew 18:15-17 will be applied. Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the Church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and by the deacons to resolve the problem. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the welfare of the Church will best be served by the exclusion of the member, the Church may take this action by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a meeting called for this purpose and upon at least one week's written notice to the membership. The Church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the Church.
- (2) Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition which has made it necessary for the Church to exclude him/her may, upon confession and demonstration of repentance, request restoration of membership by a majority vote of those present and voting at the Church in conference.
- (3) Should some condition exist, which would cause a member in a church-elected position to become a liability to the general welfare of the Church, every reasonable measure shall be taken by the pastor and the deacons to resolve the problem. If the welfare of the Church will best be served by removal of the individual from the position, the Church may take this action by a majority vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose.

Article II - Church Officers and Their Duties

All Church officers must be active, faithful members of Southside Baptist Church. The officers of the Church shall be as follows:

Section 1. **The Senior Pastor** - The Senior Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Church, in accordance with Article I, Section 2.

His duties will include:

- (1) Leading in the spiritual growth and development of the Church.
- (2) Providing spiritual nurture for believers and proclaiming the gospel to nonbelievers.
- (3) Visiting and counseling with members and assisting them in time of need.
- (4) Conducting weddings and funerals of members and their immediate families.
- (5) Reporting to the Fellowship of Deacons and to the Church in conference on the status of the administration and ministry of the Church.
- (6) General supervision of all paid staff members.

The Senior Pastor or the Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons shall preside at all business meetings. The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for the general supervision of the affairs of the Church. He shall sign all deeds and contracts of the corporation along with the Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons. In the absence of one of these, the 1st Vice Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons can be a substitute, along with the Chairman of the Budget/Finance Team, and/or Church Treasurer.

In the loss of a Senior Pastor, the Church shall elect a Pastor Search Team and an Interim Pulpit Team. The Pastor Search Team shall be elected in the following manner: The Chairman and 1st Vice Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons shall make a recommendation to the Fellowship of Deacons and on two-thirds approval, by secret ballot, the Deacons shall recommend the Team to the Church for approval. The Pastor Search Team shall be a Team of seven (7) comprised of men and women who have been members of Southside Baptist Church for at least three (3) years. The Pastor Search Team will elect a chairman from its members.

The Interim Pulpit Team will come as a recommendation from the Fellowship of Deacons. This Team shall be responsible for securing pulpit supply and recommending a permanent interim minister to the church membership.

When the Pastor Search Team has secured a suitable candidate, its recommendation will constitute a nomination. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose. The date of the meeting shall appear in a church publication which shall contain all agreements made by the Pastor Search Team pursuant to the call and shall be mailed to all church members at least two weeks prior to said meeting. An affirmative vote of two thirds of those present and voting shall be necessary for a choice. The Senior Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until his relationship with the Church is terminated by death, resignation, retirement, or dismissal.

A call for dismissal from the pastorate must be recommended by at least two thirds of the Deacons and shall require the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the congregation present and voting at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose. Notice of a meeting to consider pastoral termination must be given to the church membership at least ten (10) days in advance. When the termination is approved, the Senior Pastor shall be notified in writing of said termination and his pastoral duties terminated immediately.

Unless otherwise agreed upon in writing at the time of employment, the Senior Pastor may terminate his employment by submitting a letter of resignation to the Church in conference a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the effective date of the resignation.

Section 2. The Church Clerk - The Church shall elect annually a Church Clerk. The Church Clerk shall be the official secretary of its business conferences. The Church Clerk will keep in a suitable file at the Church a permanent record of all actions of the Church at such conferences. The Clerk shall keep a permanent record of the membership with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal and recommendation. The Clerk will have charge of all the corporate records and papers and shall attest to their accuracy with his or her signature. The Clerk shall perform such other duties as may arise from and in connection with the execution of the office.

A policy manual shall be kept of all policy changes made during the church conferences as well as policies established by teams and church staff.

Section 3. The Assistant Church Clerk - The Assistant Church Clerk shall serve in the absence of the Clerk and shall render to the Clerk such help as may be necessary.

Section 4. The Church Treasurer - The Church shall elect annually a Church Treasurer. All checks, drafts, notes, electronic payments, or orders drawn against the account of Southside Baptist Church are to be signed by any two (2) of the following: the Treasurer, Chairman of the Budget/Finance Team, Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons, 1st Vice Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons, or Church Administrator/Financial Secretary. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the Church at each regular church business conference a general report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding period. The Treasurer shall assist the Church Administrator with all the financial records of the Church and these records shall be reviewed annually by an internal and/or external source. The Treasurer shall be ex-officio member of the Budget/Finance Team.

Section 5. **The Assistant Church Treasurer** - The Chairman of the Budget/Finance Team shall function as the Assistant Church Treasurer and shall serve in the absence of the Treasurer and shall render such assistance as may be necessary in handling the financial affairs of the Church.

Section 6. **Active Deacon Officers**

-See By-Laws Article IV for Deacon Information

Article III - Church Staff and Other Church Employees

Section 1. **The Professional Staff** - The professional staff shall be defined as those staff members who are called by the Church to fill particular ministerial duties.

The Church shall call or employ such professional staff members as the Church deems necessary; recommendations will be made by the Personnel Team. The responsibilities of each professional staff member shall be detailed in a position job description, including all terms of employment and agreements, as developed by the Personnel Team.

A member of the professional staff is employed until his or her services are terminated by death, resignation, retirement, or dismissal. Termination proceedings shall be determined by the Personnel Team and the consent of the Senior Pastor.

Section 2. **Church Administrator/Financial Secretary** – Church Administrator/Financial Secretary is responsible for the day-to-day non-ministerial aspects of running a church. The administrative functions of this position involve keeping up to date on what is going on at all times throughout the church and managing routine and as-needed repairs, maintenance and general operations along with associated costs of the church. The financial functions includes organizing and paying bills; preparing and signing checks and invoices for mailing; reconciling operating accounts; creating a budget along with the help of the Budget and Finance Team; preparing annual giving statements for church members; ensuring that money counting and other financial processes are transparent, biblical, and effective; managing purchasing processes, including requisitions, purchase orders, and the use of credit cards; distributing funds to Global Missions Offering; handling payment and withholding of taxes; preparing documents for financial review; preparing 1099s and W2s; and managing donations/memorials, including acknowledgements.

Section 3. **Other Church Employees** - The Personnel Team shall be responsible for hiring other employees necessary to fulfill the ministry and administration of the Church.

Article IV - Deacons

There shall be up to thirty (30) deacons who shall elect a Chairman, 1st Vice Chairman, 2nd Vice Chairman (Family Ministry), Secretary/Treasurer from the members of the Fellowship of Deacons for one-year terms. The Deacons shall be selected by a Deacon Nominating Team and voted upon by the Church in conference. They shall serve on a rotation basis. Terms of one-half of the members shall expire each year, and an election shall be held to fill the vacancies. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the Church may elect a deacon to fill the unexpired term. After serving a term of two (2) years, a deacon shall be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of at least one year. Deacons retiring by rotation from active participation shall retain the title of deacon and may be called

upon for service at any time. There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to the Church from another church where he has served as deacon.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the Church. The task of the Deacon is to serve with the Pastor and Staff in performing pastoral ministries tasks: proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers; care for church members and other persons in the community; lead the Church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and lead the Church in performing its tasks. The Fellowship of Deacons is charged with the responsibility of seeing that the administration of the Church is carried out in an orderly and proper manner. It is also their responsibility to make recommendations to the church on matters of policy and serve as advisers and directors of policy to the duly elected officers of the Church.

The regular meetings of the Fellowship of Deacons shall be held once a month and the Chairman of the Fellowship, or, in his absence, the 1st Vice Chairman, may call a special meeting at any time the affairs of the Church require it and a quorum for transacting business at any regular or special meeting shall consist of a majority of the said Fellowship.

Article V - Educational Ministries

Section 1. **General** - All organizations of the Church shall be under church control with all general officers being elected annually by the Church and reporting regularly to the Church.

Section 2. **Sunday School** - There shall be a Sunday School under the direction of the Ministerial Staff and divided into departments and classes for all ages. It shall be conducted for the study and instruction of God's Word.

The responsibilities of the Sunday School shall be to teach the Biblical revelation; to lead in reaching persons for Christ and church membership; to lead all church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily; to provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and the denomination.

The Sunday School leadership shall be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Ministerial Staff. All Sunday School teachers shall be members of Southside Baptist Church.

Section 3. **Discipleship Training/Bible Study** - The purpose of Discipleship Training/Bible Study is to enable church members to live distinctively Christian lives and to prepare persons to assume a leadership responsibility within the congregation. The content of Discipleship Training/Bible Study is Biblical, practical, relevant and can be presented in a variety of formats. It should equip members to develop Christ-like character and behavior.

Section 4. **Missions Training** - There shall be missions training for all age groups of the church membership. This will be accomplished through various means, including adult, youth, children, women's and men's ministries, and missions conferences. The purpose of missions training is to foster a missions lifestyle which encompasses prayer, financial support, and participation in Spartanburg and around the world.

Article VI - Teams

All church teams shall be recommended by the Ministry Placement Team and elected by the Church unless otherwise indicated in the team description. Members of the church teams must be active, faithful members of Southside Baptist Church. The Senior Pastor and Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons shall be ex-officio members of all teams.

Current teams, their responsibilities, and terms of service are published annually by the Ministry Placement Team and copies are distributed to members in attendance at the church conference when election of team members takes place. Additional copies are available in the church office for others of the membership.

The following are rotating teams that are recommended annually by the Ministry Placement Team:

- Activities and Recreational Team
- Acts 1:8 Team
- Baptism Team
- Benevolence Team
- Bereavement Team
- Budget/Finance Team
- Building and Grounds Team
- Children's Team
- Community Relations Team
- Constitution and By-laws Team
- Flower/Worship Decor Team
- Greeter Team
- Historical Team
- Hostess Team
- Lord's Supper Team
- Music Team
- Prayer Team
- Preschool Team
- Seminary Aid and Student Loan Team
- Usher Team
- Vacation Bible School Team
- Women's Ministry Team
- Youth Team

The following are non-rotating Teams with positions to be filled as needed and as vacancies occur:

- Sound and Electronic Team Security (Safety) Team
- Teller Team

The following Teams are recommended by the Fellowship Deacons:

- Ministry Placement Team
- Deacon Nominating Team

The Personnel Team shall be a team of seven composed of the Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons, the 1st Vice Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons, the retiring Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons, a member of the Budget/Finance Team, and three at-large members from the congregation. The at-large members shall serve a term of three years each, with one member rotating

off the Team each year. The Ministry Placement Team shall nominate a new member for this Team each year, subject to church approval. The retiring Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons shall serve as Chairman of the Personnel Team. In the event any of the members noted above has a family member employed by the Church, his/her place on the Personnel Team will be filled by a member-at-large from the congregation chosen by the Ministry Placement Team. Likewise, no at-large member from the congregation may serve on the Personnel Team if a family member is employed by the Church.

Article VII - Government of the Church

Section 1. **Worship Services** - The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday and Wednesday at appointed times for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people.

Section 2. **Special Services** - Revival services and any other church activities which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the Church must be placed on the official church calendar in the church office.

Section 3. **Church Facilities** - Any use of church facilities must be placed on the church calendar. Any other policies regarding the use of facilities will be found in the Church Policy manual.

Section 4. **Regular Business Meetings** - Regular business meetings shall be held at least quarterly at a designated time.

The Senior Pastor or the Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons shall preside at all such meetings. The 1st Vice Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons shall be Moderator in the absence of both Senior Pastor and Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons.

At these business meetings, reports shall be made by the Church Treasurer, Budget/Finance Team, and by any other teams or organizations as the Church may from time to time require. Any other business of the Church may be considered at these conferences.

Section 5. **Special Business Meetings** - A specially called business meeting may be held to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week notice shall be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impracticable. Urgent business meetings may be called with the joint consent of the Senior Pastor and the Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons, by a majority vote of the active deacons, or by 1/3 of the resident church membership.

Section 6. **Quorum** - The government of the Church shall be in the hands of the members. A quorum for the regular church business meeting shall consist of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

A quorum for a special meeting called without prior notice to consider urgent matters must be a minimum of 125 members.

Section 7. **Voting Rights** - Each church member shall have one vote in any business transaction of the Church which might be brought before the members of the Church.

Section 8. **Church and Fiscal Year** - The church year shall begin September the first and run through the thirty-first of August. The fiscal year of the Church shall run concurrently with the calendar year.

Section 9. **Parliamentary Rules** - The current Robert's Rules of Order is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

Article VIII - Ordinances

Section 1. **Baptism** - A person who receives 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, shall be received for baptism.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
2. Baptism shall be administered by the Senior Pastor, Ministerial Staff, or other person authorized by the Ministerial Staff. The Baptism Team shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship at any of the worship services.
4. Any candidate for baptism who is physically unable to appear for public baptism by immersion may, upon approval by the Church, be baptized in either private or public in a manner in keeping with the candidate's physical condition.

Section 2. **The Lord's Supper** - The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate his second coming.

1. The Lord's Supper shall be observed quarterly, or as otherwise scheduled.
2. The Senior Pastor and Deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
3. The Lord's Supper Team shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

Article IX - Church Finances

Section 1. **Budget** - It is understood that membership of this Church involves financial obligation to support the Church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts.

The Church shall adopt an annual budget recommended to the Church by the Budget/Finance Team at a regularly scheduled business meeting or a called business meeting.

Section 2. **Accounting Procedures** - A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Budget/Finance Team.

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the Church Treasurer or Church Administrator/Financial Secretary and be properly recorded on the books of the Church. All checks, drafts, notes, electronic payments, or orders drawn against the account of Southside Baptist Church are to be approved and signed by any two (2) of the following: the Treasurer, Chairman of the Budget/Finance Team, Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons, 1st Vice Chairman of the Fellowship of Deacons, or Church Administrator/Financial Secretary. The church financial records shall be kept by the Church Administrator/Financial Secretary and/or Church Treasurer and reviewed annually. All persons handling church monies must be approved and will follow approved accounting practices.

Section 3. **Special Offerings** - Special offerings shall be taken for missions, benevolence, and special revivals or worship events. The vehicle for missions giving shall be the Global Missions Offering (GMO) which is collected through the year and distributed on a quarterly basis in specific percentages to the Lottie Moon Offering for International Missions, the Annie Armstrong Offering for North American Missions, the Janie Chapman Offering for State Missions, and strategic missions partnerships as approved by the church. Any other special offerings must be approved by the Senior Pastor and the Fellowship of Deacons.

Section 4. **Establishment of Designated Funds** - The establishment of designated funds should be in keeping with the ministry and financial goals of the Church. Designated funds must be approved by the Fellowship of Deacons and the Budget/Finance Team before they are established.

Article X - License to Preach and Ordination to the Gospel Ministry

Section 1. Any member who may, in the judgment of the Church, give evidence of his zeal, piety, and fitness to preach and evidence of his call by God to the work of the ministry, may be licensed to preach the Gospel provided that an affirmative recommendation from the Fellowship of Deacons is approved by a majority vote of the members present at any regular church conference.

Section 2. Upon the request of a member or former member who exhibits the qualities inherent in the Gospel Ministry, a call of God to the Gospel Ministry, possess the appropriate theological degree and the abilities to carry out that ministry, the Church shall, in conference, call for an Ordination Council to examine the candidate and offer recommendations. The Church shall determine whether to proceed with the ordination based upon the recommendations of the Ordination Council.

Article XI - Church Policy Manual

Section 1. **Policies and Procedures** - Church approved policies and procedures shall be described in the church policy manual which shall be kept in the church office and made available to any member of the Church. The manual shall be maintained by the Church Clerk along with the Church Administrator/Financial Secretary. Changes in policies and procedures may be initiated by any church member or organization. Procedures may be added, revised, or deleted upon approval of a majority vote of the Fellowship of Deacons.

Article XII - Adoption and Amendments

Section 1. This Constitution and these Bylaws shall be considered adopted if a majority of the members present at the conference to which it is proposed for adoption shall vote in favor of adoption of it. If and when adopted, all previous Constitutions and Bylaws shall be considered null and void.

Section 2. Changes in the Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any business meeting of the church, provided such amendments shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member by mail at least ten (10) days prior to the church conference. Amendments to the Constitution shall be by two-thirds (2/3) vote of all members of the Church present entitled to vote; amendments to the Bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

Section 3. A copy of this Constitution and these Bylaws shall at all times be kept with the record of the Church Clerk and in the church office, and any amendment to or revisions thereof shall, after passages, be prepared in typewritten form by the Clerk or his/her designee and attached to the copies of the Constitution and Bylaws so kept. This also is to apply to any resolution passed for the permanent or temporary government of the Church.

Section 4. Every ten years, from the date of adoption of this Constitution and Bylaws, a Team shall be appointed by the Ministry Placement Team for the purpose of reviewing and proposing any changes necessary to update the Constitution and Bylaws. Any changes shall be presented to the Church in accordance with the rules on amendments.

Section 5. The members of the Church shall be furnished copies of this Constitution and these Bylaws.

Constitution Review Committee

Dan Ballard, Chair

Leigh Compton

Lynn Dale

Martin Panther

Karen Tyner

Pastor Schuyler Peterson, ex-officio member

Approved in Church Conference: January 28, 2024

Next Review: 2034