

Pastor's
Copy

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and so that this body may be governed in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

I. NAME

This body shall be known as the **PRIMERA IGLESIA BAUTISTA of Arlington, Texas.**

II. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to a lost mankind. The ordinance of the church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

III. CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized 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 engage, 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 sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines.

To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage 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 Saviour to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

IV. CHARACTER

Section 1. Polity

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the association and state convention, such as Tarrant Baptist Association, Baptist General Convention of Texas which cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Section 2. Doctrine

This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of other Southern Baptist churches.

BYLAWS

V. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General

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

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Candidacy

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

- (1) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
- (2) By promise of a letter from another Baptist church of like faith and practice.
- (3) By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtainable.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and the deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of those members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

Section 3. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways (1) death, (2) dismissal to another Baptist church, (3) exclusion by action of this church*, (4) erasure upon becoming affiliated with a church of another faith or denomination.

*Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his or her covenant vows, or nonsupport of the church, the church may terminate his or her membership by a three-fourths vote, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment.

VI. CHURCH OFFICERS

All church officers must be members of the church. The officers of this church shall be as follows:

Section 1. Pastor

The pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff in performing their tasks. A major concern of the pastor is to perform pastoral responsibilities. The pastor is the leader of worship, proclamation, education, and pastoral ministry.

A pastor shall be chosen and called by a church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall be given.

A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendations will constitute a nomination, though any member has the privilege of making other nominations according to the policy established by the church. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. He shall preside at meetings of the church. The pastor shall give at least two weeks notice at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as pastor.

Section 2. Church Staff

This church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined. Vocational staff members other than the pastor shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and employed by church action.

The secretaries and custodians shall likewise be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and employed by church action.

Section 3. Deacons

(1) There may be one deacon for every twenty-five (25) members whose names are on the church roll until a maximum of twenty deacons is reached. Deacons shall be elected at regular business meetings of the church by secret ballot.

The deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Each year the term of office of one third of the number of deacons shall expire, and election shall be held to fill the vacancies. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect to fill the unexpired term. After serving a term of three years, no deacon shall be eligible for re-election until the lapse of at least one year. 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.

(2) 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 assist the pastor in performing pastoral responsibilities.

(3) The deacons shall elect their officers and shall be organized to assist the pastor, and for the consideration of problems related to their work. They may organize themselves into three committees to serve the church in the specific areas of baptism, Lord's Supper, and benevolence. Special committees may be needed for special assignments and projects. (See VII Committees).

Section 4. Moderator

The moderator shall be the pastor. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

Section 5. Clerk

It shall be the duty of the church-elected clerk to keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. He/she is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. He/she shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office when one is maintained.

Section 6. Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. The treasurer shall also have the duty of keeping an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The treasurer's report shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

Section 7. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons (Counting Committee) selected by the church; and from these he/she shall give donors individual credit. He/she shall keep the envelopes for reference for a period of two years. He/she shall be responsible for preparing and distributing the annual records of contributions to all contributing members.

Section 8. Church Ushers

Every regular church usher shall be selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The ushers shall be led by a head usher also selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The ushers are to greet people as they enter and leave the church, seat people at the proper time, provide bulletins and/or other materials at the time of seating. The ushers will be attentive to the needs of the congregation and the pastor.

Section 9. Church Council

(1) The primary function of the council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.

(2) The council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall have as regular members the pastor, minister of education, minister of music, Sunday School director, Training Union director, Woman's Missionary Union president, Baptist Men's director, and chairman of deacons. Committee chairpersons and church-elected officers shall serve as ex-officio members.

(3) All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already provided for, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

Section 10. Trustees

Three trustees, one third of whom shall be elected annually to serve for three years, and, until their successors shall be appointed, will hold in trust the property of the 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 involving the sale, mortgaging, or purchase or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required.

VII. COMMITTEES

Section 1. General

All church committee members shall be selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise indicated in the description below. The committee members shall serve on a three-year rotation system with one third to be elected each year. The following committees shall be elected.

Section 2. Baptism Committee

This committee shall consist of deacons and wives. The baptism committee is elected to assist the pastor in preparing for the ordinance of baptism. The committee is responsible for preparing the candidates and the baptistry for the ordinance. This is a deacon committee.

Section 3. Benevolence Committee

The benevolence committee is to perform acts of benevolence to persons in need in the name of Christ and His church. These needs may be physical, social, or mental. This is a deacon committee.

Section 4. Counters Committee

In teams of two per Sunday, will count the monies from each worship service and Sunday School. As they count the monies received, the committee will use the prepared forms to record the total income for that Sunday. This committee will also prepare the completed bank deposit, making sure each check has the official church stamp as endorsement.

Section 5. Evangelism Committee

This committee will have the responsibility of encouraging a spirit of evangelism in the life and ministry of the church. They will plan, promote and involve church members in evangelistic activities, such as revivals, studies on witnessing, home bible studies, weekly visitation, and other activities that will emphasize a personal and group prayer life among church members.

Section 6. Finance Committee

This committee will be responsible for preparing and recommending the budget for the following church year. They will also do the necessary promotion for the support of the budget from the church members. This committee will also make periodic checks of the monthly income and expenses to the budget and will make the necessary push when there is a deficiency in the income.

Section 7. Flower Committee

The flower committee is responsible for securing, arranging, and disposing of floral arrangements for church services and for special occasions.

Section 8. History Committee

The history committee is to preserve and use the historical records of the church. The committee is especially concerned with gathering and preserving available church records, recording full and accurate records, and using the records to help members understand and appreciate their heritage and mission.

Section 9. Lord's Supper Committee

The Lord's Supper committee prepares the elements and the equipment for the observance of the Lord's Supper. The committee does the preparatory and maintenance work needed to observe the memorial service. The committee will prepare the elements on a schedule approved by the church. This is a deacon committee.

Section 10. Missions Committee

The missions committee seeks to discover possibilities for local missions projects, shares findings with church program organizations, and serves the church in establishing and conducting such missions projects as may be assigned to it.

Section 11. Nominating Committee

The nominating committee coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions that are filled by volunteers. The nominating committee recommends persons for all volunteer positions to be elected by the church.

Section 12. Properties Committee

The properties committee assists the church in matters related to properties administration. Its work includes such areas as maintaining all church properties for ready use, recommending policies regarding use of properties, recommending employment of maintenance personnel, and assigning responsibility to appropriate personnel for supervision.

Section 13. Social Committee

This committee will have the responsibility of planning and conducting the social activities of the church, such as banquets, picnics, fellowships, and others.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church. It is understood that the pastor is an ex-officio officer of all the organizations named, and his leadership is to be recognized in them.

Section 2. Sunday School

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into departments and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of a general director, for the study of God's Word. Sunday School is to be conducted each Sunday morning.

The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the biblical revelation; lead in reaching all prospects for the church; lead all church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 3. Training Union

There shall be a Training Union, divided into departments for all ages and conducted under the direction of a general director. Training Union is to be conducted each Sunday evening or whenever opportunities for discipleship can be offered.

The tasks of the Training Union shall be to teach systematic theology, Christian history, Christian ethics, and church polity and organization; give orientation to new church members; train all church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily; train leaders for the church and the denomination; discover, recruit and train potential leaders; provide for specialized training; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 4. Woman's Missionary Union

There shall be a Woman's Missionary Union with such officers and such forms of organization as needed. The tasks of the Woman's Missionary Union shall be to teach missions; lead persons to participate in missions; provide organization and leadership for special mission projects of the church; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 5. Baptist Men

There shall be a Baptist Men organization made up of such standard organizations, including Royal Ambassadors, as needed. This program shall be directed by a director who shall be elected by the church. The tasks are to teach missions; lead all men, young men, and boys to participate in mission activities; provide organization and leadership for special projects of the church; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 6. Music Ministry

There shall be a Music Ministry under the direction of the minister of music. Such officers and organizations shall be included as needed. The music tasks shall be to teach music and hymnody; provide music and musicians for the congregational services and the organizations of the church; lead persons to participate in hymn singing; train persons to lead, sing, and play music; provide organization and leadership for special projects of the church; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

IX. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. **Worship Services**

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God and on Wednesday evening for prayer. These meeting will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

Section 2. **Regular Business Meetings**

Regular business meetings shall be held monthly on a designated Wednesday night. Should there be any unusual business or matter of unusual interest to be brought before such regular monthly meeting, notice shall be given the membership one week prior to the meeting.

Section 3. **Special Business Meetings**

A specially called business meeting may be held to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week notice must be given for the specially called business meeting.

Section 4. **Notice of Called Meetings**

Notice of all specially called business meetings of the church shall be given by announcement one week prior to the meeting, unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical.

Section 5. **Quorum**

The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 6. **Parliamentary Rules**

Robert's Rules of Order Revised is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church, the deacons, and the committees.

Section 7. **Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church shall run concurrently with the church year which begins on January 1 and ends on December 31.

X. CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1.

The finance committee, in consultation with the church council, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval and inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and world-wide expenses.

Section 2.

All funds, for any and all purposes, shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer and be properly recorded on the books of the church.

Section 3.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Each new member shall, therefore, be immediately approached by a representative of the church for a pledge to the church's unified budget; and at least annually, plans shall be put into operation for securing a worthy subscription from each member of the church.

XI. DISCIPLINE

Section 1.

Should any unhappy differences arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.

Section 2.

Should any case of gross breach of covenant, or of public scandal occur, the deacons shall endeavor to remove the offense; and if this effort fails, shall report the case to the church.

Section 3.

All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

Section 4.

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the church, upon evidence of his repentance and reformation; or, if on account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

XII. AMENDMENTS

Changes in this constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular 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 present. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds 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.