



Helotes, Texas

fbchelotes.org

Constitution And Bylaws

First Baptist Church of Helotes
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Constitution and Bylaws of First Baptist Church of Helotes

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Preamble

This Constitution and Bylaws are made to:

1. Preserve and secure the principles of our faith.
2. Preserve the liberties of each individual member.
3. Ensure freedom of action of independence from any religious body or organization.
4. Provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing members.

Constitution

I. Name

This body of believers shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Helotes, Texas, located at 14889 Old Bandera Road, Helotes Texas 78023.

This body of believers is Incorporated as a Non-Profit Organization under the Laws of the State of Texas. The seal thereof shall be in the keeping of the Church Clerk.

Its assets are pledged for use in performing the foregoing religious functions. On discontinuance of this organization by dissolution or otherwise, its assets are to be transferred to a Southern Baptist organization that is qualified as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3), Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.

II. Purpose

First Baptist Church is a body of baptized believers whose collective passion is to exalt and worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in spirit and in truth to prepare God's people for the training of the saints. We worship so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith, in attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ, to seek the lost and bring them to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

III. Statement of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired word of God and is the basis for our Statement of Faith. The church affirms the "Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. The ordinances of the church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe scriptural baptism is by immersion in water of a believer in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This act symbolizes the believer's faith and obedience, as well as his/her identification with the crucified, buried, and risen Lord. Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of membership. The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the

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bread and of the cup in symbolic remembrance of the Lord, whose body was given and whose blood was shed for the remission of sins.

IV. Government

The government of the church is vested in its members. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of its life and organization. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes the needs for mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Southern Baptist churches. Insofar as it is practical and consistent with the Purpose, the church will cooperate with and mutually work with churches, The San Antonio Baptist Association, The Baptist General Convention of Texas, and The Southern Baptist Convention.

V. Church Covenant

Having been led by the grace of God through the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit to repent of our sin and in faith turn to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and having given public testimony of this faith through baptism, we now joyfully and solemnly enter into this covenant with the members of First Baptist Church.

We commit, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to affirm and follow the Statement of Faith and Covenant in the Church Constitution, to walk together in love, to remember one another in prayer, to help one another in times of need, to exercise gentleness and humility in our dealings with one another as we speak the truth in love, to be faithful in our responsibilities and commitments, to be just and honest in our dealings, and to honor ourselves and other for Christ's sake through sexual purity, personal integrity, and abstaining from things or practices which bring harm to our faith or the faith of another.

We commit to faithful participation in times of worship, prayer, study, and fellowship with other believers, to the building up of the church by using our spiritual gifts in ministry, to contributing cheerfully and regularly for the ministry and expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel to the world.

We commit to practice personal and family worship, to train our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, and to seek the salvation of our family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances, and all peoples of the world.

We have read the Articles, Constitution, and Bylaws including those policies dealing with Duties and Rights of Members, Church Discipline and Restoration, and Church Covenant and agree to be bound by the Articles, Constitution and Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, and accompanying policies and procedures.

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VI. Amendments

Members may propose changes to the Constitution. They shall be submitted to their Service Team¹ for consideration and comment. The Service Team shall present the proposed changes and their comments to the church at a regular business meeting. The Constitution may be amended by seventy-five percent (75%) vote of the voting members present at two consecutive regular business meetings provided the proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing and announced from the pulpit thirty (30) days prior to each meeting.

Bylaws

I. Church Membership

A. General

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

The membership of the church shall consist of those persons who profess their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, having been baptized by immersion and having indicated their commitment following the teachings of the Bible as their model and standard of living, giving satisfactory proof of conversion to the Christian faith, as set forth in the New Testament.

B. Membership Candidacy

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this church. Membership may be granted by a majority vote of voting members present at any regular church service and in one of the following manners:

1. By baptism:
 - a) For persons making a public profession of faith.
 - b) For persons who have experienced salvation but have not experienced believer's baptism by immersion.
2. By letter:
 - a) Promise of letter of recommendation from another Baptist church.
3. By statement of faith:

¹ See Section III for Definition

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- a) For persons who have experienced salvation followed by believer's baptism by immersion by another Baptist church (or church of like doctrine), but are either not now Baptist, or no record is now available.
- b) For restoration upon a statement of repentance and rededication of persons who have been removed from the fellowship of a Baptist church for reasons of discipline.

If there is any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Deacons for investigation and the recommendation for action to the church within thirty (30) days. A majority vote of voting members present shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

C. Termination of Membership

Membership in the church shall be terminated by reason of:

1. Transfer of letter to another Baptist church.
2. Joining another church. A letter of transfer is not required.
3. Death.
4. Church discipline with this document and church policies.
5. Written request for termination of membership.

D. Duties and Rights of Members

1. Members are expected to:
 - a) Be godly examples in all aspects of private and public life.
 - b) Regularly attend the services of the church.
 - c) Give regularly for its support and its causes in time, money, talents, and spiritual gifts.
 - d) Participate in its organized work.
2. Members shall have the right and privilege to full participation in the life and work of the church.

E. Voting Rights of Membership

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all business matters brought before the church for a vote require a majority vote of voting members present for approval. Any vote requiring seventy-five percent (75%) vote will be done by secret ballot. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

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2. Dissolving or disposition of all, or substantially all, of the church assets— seventy-five percent (75%) vote of voting members present.
3. Acquisition or sale of real property, and/or building projects and related indebtedness—seventy-five percent (75%) vote of voting members present.
4. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the church— seventy-five percent (75%) vote of voting members present.
5. Calling or removal of the Pastor— eighty percent (80%) vote of voting members present.
6. Removal of a Deacon or church member— seventy-five percent (75%) vote of voting members present.
7. Membership termination in instances of church discipline—seventy-five percent (75%) vote of voting members present.
8. Members may request that any item presented for vote be done by secret ballot. Unless otherwise indicated, secret ballots shall be counted by the church clerk and at least two deacons.

F. Church Discipline and Restoration

It shall be the practice of this church to pursue every reasonable measure for peace and reconciliation. Should one-member sin against another member or the Body of Members (the church), engage in unrepentant moral failure or teaching of an essential Biblical heresy, the aggrieved members shall follow in a tender spirit the rules given by our Lord and Savior in Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Galatians 6:1 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14. In the event the matter cannot be resolved between the members, it shall be referred to the Pastoral Staff and Deacons for counsel and guidance.

Only after good faith efforts by the Pastoral Staff and Deacons to bring about repentance and reconciliation have proven futile, shall the accused member be subjected to discipline by the church with notice of the charges and process. All church discipline will require a majority vote of the Pastoral Staff and Deacons before presenting it to the church. In the event that termination of church membership is the recommended discipline, the church shall be notified of the charges and actions taken to date at least thirty (30) days before the vote will be held.

Members dismissed by the church shall be restored to full membership privileges by seventy-five percent (75%) vote of the church upon recommendation of the Pastoral Staff and Deacons according to the spirit of 2

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Corinthians 2:7-8 when their conduct is judged by the Pastoral Staff and Deacons to be in accordance with the Statement of Faith, Covenant, and Biblical repentance. The Pastor will communicate such restoration to the church without delay.

II. Church Offices

All who serve in church offices are to be members of the church. The church may create additional offices as needed for the ministries of the church (ie. Associate Pastor, Worship Leader, Children's Director) in consultation with Pastoral Staff and Deacons, and approved during a regular or special business meeting.

A. Pastor

1. Qualifications:

- a) A man consistent with the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.
- b) Ordained as a Southern Baptist minister.

2. Responsibilities:

- a) These generally fall into the following areas: preaching, teaching, evangelism, pastoral counseling, administration, planning, and guiding the church to grow and fulfill its purposes.
- b) He shall lead the church and its organization in performing the tasks in worship, proclamation, education, and evangelism.
- c) The Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all church standing teams, except the Pastor Search Team.
- d) He shall secure pulpit supply for times of his absence.

3. Call:

- a) A Pastor shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs.
- b) A Pastor Search Team shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor and this team's recommendation will serve as a nomination.
- c) The Pastor Search Team will recommend only one candidate at a time.
- d) The Pastor Search Team will give members at least two weeks' notice of the presentation of the candidate.
- e) Election will be by secret ballot and an affirmative vote of eighty percent (80%) of the voting members present is necessary.

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4. Term of Service:

- a) The Pastor shall serve until either his resignation or the church terminates the relationship, and in either case, at least two weeks (14 days) written notice shall be given unless otherwise mutually agreed or in the event of essential moral failure or essential biblical heresy.
- b) If sufficient cause is found to terminate the Pastor, members shall be given written notice at least two weeks prior to a regular or called business meeting for that purpose. The meeting may be called only upon the recommendation of seventy-five percent (75%) of the Deacons or by a written petition signed by not less than thirty-three percent (33%) of the voting members.
- c) The vote to declare the position of Pastor vacant shall be by secret ballot. An affirmative vote of eighty percent (80%) of the voting members present is necessary.
- d) Except in instances of gross misconduct by the Pastor so excluded from office, the church will compensate the pastor with one (1) month's salary, payable within 30 days.

5. Vacancy:

- a) During a period of vacancy in the Pastor position, leadership will pass to the Chairman of the Deacons.
- b) The Chairman of the Deacons will work with our Association and State Convention to ensure qualified men are scheduled to preach during the transition time.
- c) The Chairman of the Deacons will follow guidelines in these Bylaws and Church Ministry Guidelines to form the Pastor Search Team.

B. Deacons

1. Responsibilities: Deacons are first and foremost servants. The word "Deacon" translated in the original language in the Bible means "servant". Deacons are to serve the body of Christ as needed in support of the ministry of the pastor and church in the following:
 - a) Lead the church in the achievement of its mission.
 - b) Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
 - c) Care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

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2. Number of Deacons: The church shall elect as many qualified members to serve as Deacons as deemed necessary by the Pastor and active Deacon board to fulfill the ministry of the church.
3. Term of Service: It is the belief of this church that once a member is called to be a Deacon, that person is a Deacon for life unless the member no longer meets the minimum qualifications.
 - a) Deacons may also choose to move themselves to an inactive status at any time by providing a written notice to be reviewed by the Pastor and chairman of Deacons. A deacon may not remain inactive at the suffrage of the church and could be asked to serve in the event or circumstance the church becomes in need.
 - b) If a Deacon is moved to inactive status for any reason, the procedures for Deacon Election will be followed.
4. Minimum Qualifications: A Deacon must:
 - a) Confess to be a born again Christian with a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and living a life controlled by the Holy Spirit.
 - b) Read and accept the Scriptural basis for Deacons as prescribed in Acts 6:3-8 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
 - c) Support by prayer and participation in the entire church ministry, particularly Sunday school, Sunday worship services, mid-week services, deacon family ministry plan and other services of God's work insofar as able in good faith and conscience.
 - d) Shall be a member of First Baptist Church for at least six months prior to the time of nomination for election as a deacon-in-service.
 - e) Must be a baptized-believer for at least three years prior to the time of nomination for election as a deacon-in-service.
5. Election:
 - a) The qualifications, duties and expectations will be made available to the membership when the need for a new active deacon or deacons is established. After prayer and review of the Deacon criteria, each member may nominate a member for each vacancy to be filled.

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- b) Once the need is established and the qualifications, duties, and expectations of a Deacon have been made available to the members, a timeframe will be set aside for collecting the nominee's names.
 - c) After the candidates have been recommended and reviewed by the Pastor and active Deacons and found worthy of holding the office.
 - d) Nominations will be brought before the Church in a scheduled Church business meeting, the election shall be made by a majority of those members present and voting by written ballot.
 - e) The nominees will go through a period of training for three (3) months prior to ordination.
6. Chairman of the Deacons: The deacons will select their own chairman.

C. Clerk

1. Responsibilities: The clerk shall be responsible for supervising the keeping of a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. Duties include:
 - a) Keep a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms.
 - b) Issue letters of dismissal voted by the church.
 - c) Preserve on file all communications and written (or electronic) official reports.
 - d) Give required notice of all meeting where notice is necessary, as indicated by these Bylaws
 - e) Prepare the annual profile of the church to the association.
 - f) At least one copy of all church documentation shall be maintained outside the church.
 - g) The church may delegate some or all of the clerical responsibilities to a secretary who will assist the elected clerk.
2. Term of Service:
 - a) The church shall annually elect a clerk as its clerical officer to coincide with the beginning of the church year.

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D. Moderator

The pastor shall preside at all regular and called business meetings of the church.

- a) In the absence of the pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons shall preside.
- b) In the absence of the pastor and the Chairman of the Deacons, the church clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator will be elected.

E. Treasurer

1. Responsibilities:

- a) Working in cooperation with the Financial Secretary to receive, preserve, and pay out approved expenses, all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.
- b) Render an itemized report of receipts and disbursements at each regular business meeting.
- c) Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance/approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as part of the permanent records of the church.
- d) In harmony with the Financial Secretary individual contributions will be treated as privileged communication and will not be made available for public scrutiny.

2. Term of Service:

- a) The church shall annually elect a treasurer as its financial officer to coincide with the beginning of the church year.

F. Trustees

At least three (3) trustees shall be elected by the church to serve as legal officers for the church.

1. Responsibilities:

- a) They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property of the church without specific vote of the church authorizing each action.

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- b) When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, lease, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

2. Term of Service:

- a) Trustees shall serve a three (3) year staggered term, rotating off the Board in sequential order, with one new trustee being elected every year to coincide with the beginning of the church year.
- b) If a vacancy occurs during the year, a vote will be conducted during a regular or called business meeting to fill the remaining term of the vacated position.
- c) No trustee may be re-elected to successive terms.

III. Service Teams

To facilitate the work of the church and the membership connection there shall be Service Teams. General guidance for the scope of their work will be outlined in these Bylaws. All Service Teams and ministries shall be accountable to the church, under the direction of the Pastor. In addition, the church may at any time request a special report on any aspect of any team or ministry.

A. Definition:

1. Standing: Teams with no limit to consecutive terms in action.
2. Ad-Hoc: Teams created temporarily for a specific purpose or task and will end upon conclusion of specific purpose or task.

B. Establishment:

When new Service Teams are to be established (standing or ad-hoc), the following steps should be followed:

1. Need identified and approved by the church.
2. Once the need for the team has been identified, the Personnel Team will work to identify a lead team member.
3. Once a lead team member has been identified, he/she will work with the Personnel Team to identify additional people to comprise the team (at least 3 members are required).
4. Once potential team members are identified, the Personnel Team will formally present the potential team members to the church

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(during a regular or called business meeting) for vote and approval.

C. Number of Members:

Each Service Team will be composed of no less than ten members. The size of the Service Team will be determined by the needs of the church and as advised by the pastoral staff. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of each standing Service Team serving as a resource person and liaison.

D. Standing Service Teams:

Standing Service Teams shall include teams authorized by the church. Members of standing Service Teams shall serve on a three-year rotation.

1. The MINISTRY TEAM serves to support common committee taskings that include but are not limited to Evangelism, Baptism, Benevolence, Children, Church Growth, Fellowship, Library, Lord's Supper, Nursery, Publicity, Recreation, Special Events, Ushering and Youth needs.
2. The STEWARDSHIP TEAM serves to support common committee taskings that include but are not limited to Budget and Finance, and Church Tellers needs.
3. The CAMPUS TEAM serves to support common committee taskings that include but are not limited to Audio-Visual, Building and Grounds, Facilities and Equipment needs.
4. The PERSONNEL TEAM serves to support common committee tasking that include but are not limited to Church Council, Nominating, and Personnel needs.

E. Ad-Hoc Teams:

1. The church has the authority to form Ad-hoc Teams at any regular or called business meeting.
2. Members of Ad-hoc Teams shall serve on the team until the assigned task is complete.

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F. Operation

1. Each Service Team shall have a team leader and co-leader.
2. Each Service Team shall annually review its policies and procedures to ensure team effectiveness.

G. Coordination

1. In the spirit of cooperation, each Service Team, through its team leader, shall consult with all other Service Teams, which may be affected by any contemplated action, prior to action being taken.
2. Any Service Team recommendations requiring approval of the church shall be submitted to the pastor, as needed, prior to church action. In addition, if such action shall require non-budgeted funds, the Stewardship Team shall review and present the request to the church for approval.

IV. Church Ordinances

A. 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. The Senior Pastor, other ordained Baptist clergy, or an active deacon as authorized by the Senior Pastor shall administer Baptism.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.

B. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby baptized believers, 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 should be observed as often as the Church shall determine by vote.

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2. The Pastor shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
3. The Deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparation and serving of the Lord's Supper.
4. All believers, who after a time of self-examination, not under church discipline and who feel led, may partake of the Lord's Supper.

V. Licensing and Ordaining to the Gospel Ministry

1. When a member feels he is called by God to the ministry and, in the judgment of the Church, gives evidence of such call; he may be licensed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ provided seventy-five percent (75%) of the Church members present and voting at any scheduled Church business meeting shall agree thereto.
2. The Church, by seventy-five percent (75%) of those members present and voting at a scheduled Church business meeting, may recommend for examination by an ordination council one of its licensed preachers, who appears to possess the scriptural qualifications for ordination.
3. The ordination council shall be comprised of ordained ministers and deacons from Baptist Churches affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas or the Southern Baptist Convention. The council, after detailed examination of the candidate for ordination, shall render to the Church a recommendation concerning the propriety of ordaining the candidate. Upon favorable recommendation by the ordination council and approval by seventy-five percent (75%) of those members present and voting at a business meeting, the candidate is approved for ordination. The candidate may be ordained in an ordination service when he has been called to serve by a church, organization or other ministry, or he has entered full time evangelistic work. Qualifications for being ordained as a minister are as set forth in I Timothy 3: 2-7.

VI. Church Meetings

A. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly on Sundays for the worship of God, for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and Wednesdays for encouragement, prayer

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and Bible study. These meetings will be open for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor or his designee.

B. Special Services

Revival services and other functions, which are essential in the promotion of the church's Purpose, shall be scheduled accordingly.

C. Regular Business Meetings

1. Regular business meetings shall be quarterly (March, June, September, and December) or as frequent as needed to administer church business.
2. The Pastor or his designee may reschedule a regular business meeting with seven-day advance notice or extenuating circumstances.

D. Called Business Meeting

1. A called business meeting to consider special matters of significant nature may be called by:
 - a) The Pastor or Chairman of the Deacons.
 - b) The church with written application by a minimum of thirty percent (30%) of the voting members.
2. Notification Requirement:
 - a) A minimum one-week written notice must be given for any purpose which does not require seventy-five percent (75%) vote of voting members present approval.
 - b) A minimum two-week written notice must be given for any purpose which requires seventy-five percent (75%) vote of voting members present approval.
3. Action may be taken only on items specified in the written purpose of the called business meeting.

E. Quorum

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

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F. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order (revised edition) is adopted as the standard for parliamentary rules of procedure for all regular and called business meetings of the church. Effort will be made to follow the Robert's Rules of Order standards in parliamentary procedure.

VII. Church Finances

A. Budget

The Stewardship Team, in consultation with the pastoral staff, shall prepare and submit a budget to the church for introduction prior to the beginning of the church year. The approved church budget becomes effective at the beginning of the calendar year.

B. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall coincide with the church calendar year.

VIII. Elections, Rotations, and Vacancies

Elections, rotations, and vacancies shall be in accordance with church policy and coincide with the beginning of the church year.

IX. Amendments

Members may propose changes to the Bylaws. They shall be submitted to their Service Team for consideration and comment. After coordination with the Pastoral Staff, the Service Team shall present the proposed changes and their comments to the church at a regular or special business meeting. The Bylaws may be amended by seventy-five percent (75%) vote of the voting members present at two consecutive regular and/or called business meetings provided the proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing and announced from the pulpit thirty (30) days prior to each meeting.