

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH JUSTIN BYLAWS

Adopted by Congregational Vote on July 12, 2020

PREAMBLE

The mission statement of Justin First Baptist Church shall be added to these bylaws without special notice or vote once established and affirmed by the Elder Team. Subsequent changes to the mission statement may be proposed and adopted as an amendment in accordance with Section 12.4 of these bylaws.

ARTICLE 1: CHURCH NAME

- 1.1 As stated in the articles of incorporation, the congregation is organized as Justin First Baptist Church, Inc., a Texas non-profit corporation, which operates under and shall be known as “First Baptist Church Justin”, hereafter referred to in these bylaws as “the Church”.

ARTICLE 2: CHURCH AUTHORITY

- 2.1 **Biblically Based.** The Bible is the inerrant, inspired, and infallible word of God, and as such shall be the foundational document for the church and shall guide all decisions on authority, faith, and practice.
 - 2.1.1 **Biblical Interpretation.** Whenever interpretation of the Bible is required, the Elder Team shall be empowered to make said interpretation on behalf of the Church.
- 2.2 **Jesus as Head.** Jesus is the head of the church and guides the Elder Team through the Holy Spirit as they shepherd the congregation.
- 2.3 **Elder Team Led.** Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Elder Team will lead the congregation as the human leaders of the church. The Elder Team will be the human authority for the church on all matters not listed in these bylaws in Article 4.2.6.1 as items voted on by the Membership.
 - 2.3.1 **Trustees.** The active lay Elders shall act *ex officio* on behalf of the Church as Trustees.
 - 2.3.1.1 **Duties.** The Trustees shall (1) hold in trust the real property of the church, (2) have the power, upon vote of the church membership, to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer church property, and (3) sign legal documents on behalf of the church (at which point two signatures are required).
 - 2.3.1.2 **Contractual Authority.** In order to enter into a binding legal contract of any sort in regards to the church or church property, at least two (2) Trustees’ signatures are required. Any contractual agreement concerning the church or church property that does not comply with Article 2.3.1 of these bylaws is not binding on the church.

- 2.4 Congregationally Affirmed.** The voting Members of the Church will affirm the selection of the Elder Team and continue to vote on certain matters as listed in these bylaws in Article 4.2.6.1.
- 2.5 Southern Baptist Affiliated.** The Church affirms in full and adopts in practice the *Baptist Faith & Message 2000*.

ARTICLE 3: CHURCH ENTITY AND PROPERTY

- 3.1 Texas Non-profit.** The church has been organized as a Texas non-profit corporation and is currently a 501(c) (3) entity under the Internal Revenue Tax Code for federal tax purposes.
- 3.2 Registered Office and Agent.** The registered office of the church is 402 8th Street, Justin, TX 76247. The registered agent of the church is the Senior Pastor of the church. When no Senior Pastor is in office, the Elder Team shall designate an Elder to serve as the agent.
- 3.3 Church Property.** No individual person shall have individual ownership or any other interest or property rights of any nature in the church property. The church property is held solely by the church as a non-profit corporation.

ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Requirements.** Membership of the church will consist of those persons who have (1) made a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, (2) have subsequently been baptized by immersion as a public profession of that faith, and (3) been approved for membership by the Elder Team.
- 4.2 Expectations.** Members of the church commit to actively promote the mission of the church by taking the following actions.
- 4.2.1 Serve.** All church members are expected to volunteer with a ministry of the church.
- 4.2.2 Worship.** All church members are expected to regularly attend corporate worship services at the church and to partake in personal worship through spiritual disciplines.
- 4.2.3 Fellowship.** All church members are expected to meaningfully fellowship regularly with other members of the church.
- 4.2.4 Disciple.** All church members are expected to be discipled in order to become more like Christ and to make disciples of others to that same end.
- 4.2.5 Give.** All church members are expected to be good stewards of their financial resources, including ongoing financial support of the church.
- 4.2.6 Participate in the Business of the Church, as follows:**
- 4.2.6.1 Voting.** Members retain the right and responsibility to vote on the following matters:
- Purchase or sale of real estate

- Incurring debt in excess of 25% of the current annual budget
- Approval of the annual budget as proposed by the Elder Team
- Adopting amendments to these bylaws as proposed by the Elder Team
- Dissolution

4.2.6.2 Church Discipline. Members retain the rights and responsibilities regarding Church Discipline as outlined in Article 5.1 of these bylaws.

4.2.6.3 Assessment of Elder Candidates and Deacon Candidates. In accordance with Article 6.3 and 8.3, Members retain the right and responsibility to participate in the evaluation and assessment of Elder candidates, including candidates for Lead Pastor, and Deacon candidates during those times when such evaluations and assessments are announced and are being held.

4.2.6.4 Nomination of Deacon Candidates. As outlined in Article 8.3.2, Members may submit formal nominations of individuals for consideration during designated times when nominations are being received.

4.2.6.5 Amendments. Members retain the right to submit recommendations for amendments to these bylaws for consideration by the Elder Team. All such recommendations shall be submitted to the Church office in writing. No anonymous recommendations shall be considered.

4.2.6.6 Business Meetings. Members retain the right to participate in regular and special business meetings in an orderly fashion in accordance with Article 10.2 of these bylaws.

4.3 Termination. Membership can be terminated in instance of (1) transfer of membership to another church, (2) death, (3) request of the member, (4) church discipline as outlined in Article 5.1 of these Bylaws, or (5) neglect of membership expectations as outlined in Article 4.2 of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE 5: CHURCH DISCIPLINE AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

5.1 Church Discipline. Church Discipline is the formal procedure by which the Church, its Elder Team, and its Members address matters of sin. The foundation for Church Discipline is Jesus' own teaching found in Matthew 18:15-17:

5.1.1 Step One. Approach the person individually, seeking repentance and reconciliation.

5.1.1.1 This step may be bypassed in matters of alleged physical or sexual assault or other criminal activity, in which case the person alleging said activity must take an Elder to approach the person, or ask the Elder Team to go in their stead.

5.1.1.2 Any alleged criminal activity will result in the proper authorities being notified in compliance with federal, state, and local laws. The person will be removed from any volunteer or leadership positions until such time as

the matter is resolved in a manner showing the person's innocence in alleged matters.

5.1.1.3 For any other allegation, the Elder Team at their discretion may suspend from service or leadership any Church Member while a matter is resolved.

5.1.2 Step Two. If necessary, following attempts made individually, approach the person with one or more others, seeking repentance and reconciliation.

5.1.3 Step Three. If a person remains unrepentant/irreconcilable given a reasonable amount of time (determined by the Elder Team), the matter will be presented to the Elder Team, who will decide whether the person be presented to the Church. The Elder Team may carry out disciplinary action (for example, removal from leadership). If removal from Membership is recommended, the matter will go before the Church.

5.1.3.1 A vote to remove the person from Membership must pass by 90%.

5.1.3.2 A person may be reconsidered for Membership in accordance with Article 4.1 of these Bylaws at any point in the future if repentance/reconciliation is determined to have taken place.

5.2 Dispute Resolution. Dispute Resolution is the formal process by which the Church, its Elder Team, and its Members address matters of disagreement not relating to sin.

5.2.1 Staff / Personnel. Dispute resolution guidelines/policies for employees of the Church will be detailed in the Church's personnel policies, and shall be binding on all employees of the Church.

5.2.2 Leaders / Volunteers. Non-employee ministry leaders, volunteers, etc. shall resolve disputes concerning ministry activity or leadership in the same manner by which matters of sin are resolved.

5.2.2.1 Approach the person individually.

5.2.2.2 If no resolution is achieved, approach the individual with the ministry leader associated. If the person in question is an employee of the Church, approach him/her with the Lead Pastor; in such a case, decisions made by the Lead Pastor regarding the issue shall be final.

ARTICLE 6: ELDER TEAM

6.1 Duties. The duties of The Elder Team shall be as follows, in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws:

6.1.1 Shepherd and Equip saints for ministry

6.1.2 Lead in the establishment and stewardship of the vision and mission of the Church

6.1.3 Evaluate and assess potential Elder Team candidates continuously

6.1.4 Participate in the appointment and/or removal of an Elder, in accordance with Article 6.3 of these Bylaws

- 6.1.5 Evaluate regularly the effectiveness and quality of the ministries, programming, and operations of the church, but not administer said activities.
- 6.1.6 Oversee the process for and administer church discipline as necessary, in accordance with Article 5.1 of these Bylaws.

1. **Qualifications.**

6.2.1 Biblical Qualifications.

6.2.1.1 Any Elder or candidate for the Elder Team must, upon thorough evaluation and assessment according to Article 6.3.1 of these Bylaws, meet the Biblical requirements as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4

6.2.1.2 Any Elder or candidate for the Elder Team must demonstrate a calling to pastoral ministry.

6.2.2 Practical Qualifications.

6.2.2.1 Any Elder or candidate for the Elder Team shall be involved in and of good repute in the local community.

6.2.2.2 Any Elder or candidate for the Elder Team shall be a Member of the Church in good standing, having been a member for no fewer than 2 years.

6.2.2.3 Any candidate for the Elder Team must be thoroughly evaluated and assessed by the Elder Team, including any candidate who has served as Elder previously.

6.2.2.4 Any Elder or candidate for the Elder Team shall be willing to commit up to 20 hours per week, with the possibility of more situationally.

6.3 Appointment of New Members of the Elder Team.

6.3.1 The process the Elder Team will follow in order to appoint a new Elder is as follows

6.3.1.1 The Elder Team will receive recommendations for potential Elder candidates by members in good standing

6.3.1.2 The Elder Team will extend an invitation to potential elder candidates to enter evaluation process

6.3.1.3 The Elder Team will present candidates to the church body giving the opportunity to pray for the evaluation process or to give input.

6.3.1.4 The Elder Team will assess potential Elder candidates based upon biblical and practical qualifications as outlined in Article 6.2 of these Bylaws.

6.3.1.5 The Elder Team will ordain the confirmed new Elder in the presence of the church body.

6.3.2 The candidates for the initial Elder Team will be assessed and evaluated by a team composed of the Senior Pastor, church members in good standing, and other experienced Elders selected from local Baptist churches.

6.3.3 Subsequent Elder candidates will be evaluated by the currently serving Elder Team.

6.4 Minimum Number of Elder Team Members.

- 6.4.1** The minimum number of Elder Team members will be five (5), including the senior pastor who serves *ex officio* as an Elder.
- 6.4.2** Unless situationally otherwise determined or allowed by Article 6.4.3 of these Bylaws, the lay membership of the Elder Team must outnumber the staff membership by at least one.
- 6.4.3** If due to vacancy or otherwise, the active Elder Team numbers fewer than five (5), the Elder Team must use their reasonable efforts to fill enough vacancies to reach the minimum number of Elder Team members, but they may continue to serve and operate as normal in the interim so long as such efforts are being made.
 - 6.4.3.1** If vacancies shall cause the number of staff Elders to outnumber lay Elders at any time, only the Lead Pastor, serving *ex officio*, shall vote as a staff Elder until vacancies can be filled.
 - 6.4.3.2** If vacancies shall cause the number of staff Elders and lay Elders to be equal in number, the Eldership Team may operate as usual until such vacancies are filled, in accordance with Article 6.6 of these Bylaws.
- 6.4.4** The Elder Team may increase the minimum number of Elder Team members as necessary, to be determined by the Elder Team. In such a time of need, the minimum number of Elder Team members must increase in a manner that maintains the proper ratio of lay to staff members.

6.5 Terms.

- 6.5.1** The initially appointed lay Elder Team members shall serve terms of three, four, and five years, respectively.
- 6.5.2** Any Elder appointed thereafter will serve a term of 5 years. The Elder Team shall maintain staggered terms.
- 6.5.3** Any Elder must take one year off following the completion of a term before becoming eligible to serve as Elder again.
- 6.5.4** An Elder appointed to fill a vacancy is appointed for the unexpired term of his predecessor in office. A decrease in the number of Elder Team members does not shorten an incumbent member's term.
- 6.5.5** Staff Elder term length will be determined by the lead pastor with the approval of the Elder Team, not to exceed five years.
- 6.5.6** The lead pastor serves *ex officio*, and therefore may serve indefinitely.

6.6 Vacancies on the Elder Team.

- 6.6.1** If a vacancy occurs on the Elder Team, including a vacancy resulting from an increase in the number of members, the vacancy may be filled in accordance with these Bylaws by the unanimous affirmative vote of the remaining active Elder Team.
- 6.6.2** Expected vacancies may be filled in advance, not more than 6 months prior to the vacancy occurring.

- 6.6.3** If a vacancy occurs that leaves less than one year of service, that vacancy shall not be filled until the next appropriate cycle.
- 6.6.4** If any vacancy reduces the number of active members to a number less than the minimum required, the Elder Team may still function so long as reasonable effort is being made to fill said vacancy, or if that vacancy leaves less than a one year period remaining on that term.

6.7 Removal of an Elder.

6.7.1 Vote of the Elder Team.

- 6.7.1.1** The Elder Team may remove an Elder, but only by a unanimous vote of the remaining Elder Team. No Elder shall vote regarding his own removal.
- 6.7.1.2** An Elder may be removed by the Elder Team only at a meeting called for the purpose of removing the Elder and the meeting notice must state that the purpose, or one of the purposes, of the meeting is removal of the Elder.
- 6.7.1.3** Any Elder whose removal is being considered must be given written notice 14 days prior to the meeting at which his removal is to be discussed, to give him in good faith an opportunity to prepare to speak on his own behalf regarding the matters for which the removal is being considered. He is allowed to hear all discussion concerning his potential removal, but he shall not be present at the time of the vote. No further discussion will take place once the vote is called and the Elder in question dismissed from the meeting.
- 6.7.1.4** For any reason, the Elder Team may place an Elder being considered for removal on leave of absence, during which he shall not take part in any Elder Team meetings or activities, except the discussion concerning his potential removal, until the matter is resolved. If the Elder in question is not removed as a result of the discussion and subsequent vote, he may be reinstated immediately to full service unless it is deemed appropriate by the Elder Team for his leave of absence to continue. If his leave of absence is extended, a plan of action must be presented to the Elder detailing the path and timeline to his full reinstatement. This plan of action and timeline will be determined by the Elder Team.

6.7.2 Resignation.

- 6.7.2.1** An Elder may resign at any time by delivering written notice to the Elder Team.
- 6.7.2.2** A resignation is effective when the notice is delivered unless the notice specifies a later effective date.

6.7.3 Congregational No-Confidence Vote.

- 6.7.3.1** A call for a vote of no-confidence for any active Elder can be called at any business meeting of the Church by any active Member of the Church, if a) that Member has met with the Elder in question and with the Elder Team (according to Scripture and these Bylaws) regarding his/her concerns over

the Elder in question, b) all reasonable efforts have been made (according to Scripture and these Bylaws) to resolve any issues, and c) the motion for the vote is in accordance with the governing rules of the meeting.

6.7.3.2 Any motion to remove an elder must pass with a 90% vote in favor of said motion.

6.7.4 Death.

6.7.5 Expiration of Term.

6.8 Meetings.

6.8.1 The Elder Team shall meet regularly. Such meetings may be at any time or place of their discretion.

6.8.2 The Elder Team may meet with or without notice, except as noted in Article 6.7.1.3 of these Bylaws.

6.8.3 The Elder Team shall be required to keep a physical or digital record of all meetings of the Elder Team.

ARTICLE 7: LEAD PASTOR

7.1 Qualifications. The Lead Pastor must meet the biblical qualifications for the Elder Team according to Article 6.2.1 of these Bylaws.

7.2 Primary Responsibilities. The Lead Pastor will serve *ex officio* as a member of the Elder Team. As such, his primary responsibility will be to lead the church as part of the Elder Team. In addition, the Lead Pastor will provide leadership for the church staff and be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the church.

7.3 Personnel. The Elder Team shall oversee all personnel policies, procedures, and activities. The Lead Pastor, under the guidance of the Elder Team, has full authority to staff the church as needed. This includes the ability and responsibility to hire, terminate, evaluate, and/or reassign staff.

7.4 Vacancy. When a vacancy occurs in the Lead Pastor office, the Elder Team will be responsible for searching for and selecting the next Lead Pastor.

7.4.1 Search. As the Lead Pastor serves as part of the Elder Team, the Elder Team, or a team selected by the Elder Team, will conduct a thorough search for the next Lead Pastor, assessing and evaluating candidates based on biblical and practical qualifications. This search will include advertising the open position outside of the church and keeping the congregation updated on the search so they can pray for the process and provide input in accordance with Article 4.2.6.3 of these Bylaws.

7.4.2 Selection. The Elder Team will present a candidate for Lead Pastor to the congregation, giving the opportunity for the congregation to provide input and pray for the candidate in accordance with Article 4.2.6.3 of these Bylaws.

7.4.3 Appointment. The Elder Team will appoint the candidate as the Lead Pastor in the presence of the church body.

7.5 Removal. As a member of the Elder Team, the Lead Pastor may be removed in accordance with Article 6.7 of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE 8: DEACONS

8.1 Qualifications. The Candidates for the office of Deacons must meet the biblical qualifications of Acts 6:2-6 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

8.1.1 The Church will expect its Deacon Team to live in accordance to the qualifications of Acts 6:2-6 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

8.1.2 Candidates for the office of Deacon must have been a church member for at least 1 year, if not previously ordained as a deacon in another church of like-minded belief and practice, whereas, the Candidate may be considered after six (6) months for the Deacon Team.

8.1.2.1 No obligation exists on the part of the Deacon Team to invite anyone who has been a deacon in another Baptist Church or church of like-minded belief and practice to serve as deacon in the Church.

8.2 Primary Responsibility. The primary responsibility of the Deacons is to serve the membership of the church.

8.3 Selection of Deacons.

8.3.1 The Deacon Team, along with the Elder Team, shall review the number of deacons needed and request nominations for deacon candidates.

8.3.2 Church members may nominate Deacon Candidates to the Deacon Team for a time period determined by the Deacon Body, no less than thirty days.

8.3.3 The Deacon Body will review the list of the Deacon Nominations and determine those Nominees that will meet the qualifications in Article 8.1 of these Bylaws.

8.3.4 Two (2) Active Deacons will interview those Nominees, reporting to the Deacon Team, who are willing to serve and to determine the Scriptural requirements are met.

8.3.5 Upon completion of a preliminary Deacon Candidate list, the Deacon Team will inform the Church of those that have met the Scriptural requirements and Qualifications in Article 8.1 of these Bylaws, submitting their names to the Church for consideration and affirmation.

8.3.6 The remaining Deacon Candidates, those who have been evaluated, considered and affirmed by the Church, having been found qualified to serve will be presented to the Church to be ordained to the office of Deacon.

8.4 Terms.

8.4.1 Deacons will serve a term of 5 years.

8.4.2 The Deacon Team shall establish and maintain staggered terms.

8.4.3 Deacons must take one year off following the completion of a term before becoming eligible to serve as a Deacon again.

8.5 Removal. A Deacon may be removed from the Deacon Team by the following:

- 8.5.1 A decision of the Elder Team
- 8.5.2 A decision of the Deacon Team working in conjunction with the Elder Team
- 8.5.3 Resignation
- 8.4.4 Death
- 8.4.5 Expiration of Term

ARTICLE 9: ORDINANCES

- 9.1 **Baptism.** Baptism is the immersion in water of a person who has confessed Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. This act is not salvific, but is an act of obedience to Jesus as a way of publicly proclaiming their faith. Baptism shall be observed as needed under the supervision of the Elder Team.
- 9.2 **Lord's Supper.** The Lord's Supper is a corporate remembering of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by partaking of bread and fruit of the vine as a representation of Jesus' body and blood. The church shall observe the Lord's Supper regularly during corporate worship, no less than quarterly according to the calendar year.

ARTICLE 10: CHURCH GATHERINGS

- 10.1 **Corporate Worship.** The church shall meet regularly for corporate worship of God. These gatherings shall be under the leadership of the Lead Pastor or designee.
- 10.2 **Business Meetings.** Business of the church requiring a vote or affirmation by the church membership will be conducted at Business Meetings. These can be outside of the corporate worship time or serve as a portion of one. These meetings should also serve as an opportunity for the Elder Team to communicate vision and information to the church members.
 - 10.2.1 **Frequency.** The church shall hold no fewer than one Business Meeting yearly.
 - 10.2.2 **Posting.** Business Meeting date, time, place, and subject matter shall be posted to the church members no later than seven days prior to the meeting.
 - 10.2.3 **Rules of Order.** All Business Meetings at the church will be governed by logical, orderly procedure. The Modern Edition of Robert's Rules of Order can be used as a resource if deemed necessary by the Moderator or Elder Team.
 - 10.2.4 **Voting.** For issues requiring a vote, a quorum must be present, and the only persons who may vote are church members who are (1) twelve years of age or older and (2) present at the meeting. An absentee vote may be received at the discretion of the Elder Team. A proxy vote shall not be allowed.
 - 10.2.5 **Quorum.** A quorum will consist of those church members present for any meeting that followed notification procedures as outlined in Section 9.2.2 of these Bylaws.
 - 10.2.6 **Moderator.** A member of the Elder Team or designee shall serve as Moderator for all Business Meetings.

ARTICLE 11: FISCAL POLICIES

- 11.1 Fiscal Authority.** As the leaders of the church, the Elder Team will be responsible for the finances of the church, including preparing and executing the budget. They may designate this responsibility to church members as deemed reasonable.
- 11.2 Trustees.** The trustees shall act as necessary in fiscal matter and policy in accordance with Article 2.3.1 of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE 12: MISCELLANEOUS

- 12.1 Indemnification.** Each officer or employee of the church shall be indemnified by the church against expenses reasonably incurred by them in connection with any action, suit, or proceeding to which they may be made a party to by reason of being or having been an officer or employee of the church, except in relation to matters as to which they shall be finally adjudged in such action, suit, or proceeding to have been derelict in the performance of their duty as an officer or employee.
- 12.2 Effective Date.** These bylaws become **binding** immediately on the date and time of their affirmation by vote of the Membership. Said date will be added to the language of these bylaws without special vote. They become **effective** once the minimum number of Elder Team members are appointed according to Article 6 of these Bylaws, until when the previous bylaws remain in effect. These Bylaws supersede and replace in their entirety any Bylaws or amendments to Bylaws prior to the effective date.
- 12.3 Dissolution.** Upon dissolution of the church, after all liabilities and obligations are paid, satisfied, and discharged, the property of the church shall be applied and distributed as follows: (1) property held by the church on a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance because of the dissolution shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with that requirement; and (2) the remaining property shall be distributed for one or more exempt purpose within the meaning of section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. If at the time of dissolution, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention is exempt under Section 501(c) (3), then the property shall be distributed to that Convention.
- 12.4 Amendments.** Amendments to these Bylaws may only be brought before the church by the Elder Team. Any other church member may propose amendments to the Elder Team in accordance with Article 4.2.6.5 of these Bylaws. If the Elder Team determines that an amendment is necessary, they must propose the amendment at a Business Meeting and then the amendment can be voted on at a subsequent Business Meeting. Adoption of amendments shall require approval of 75% of voting church members present.