

Proposed Bylaws
of
Trinity Southern Baptist Church
Fresno, California
A California Nonprofit Religious Corporation

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PREAMBLE

We declare and establish these bylaws to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern this Church body in an orderly manner. These bylaws will preserve the liberties of each individual Church member and the freedom of action of this Church body.

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this Church shall be "Trinity Southern Baptist Church Fresno, California."

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Section A: Purpose

Our purpose is to be disciples who make disciples by encouraging and building one another up in Christ, holding the Word of God as absolute authority in our lives, and carrying the Gospel of Christ to our families, friends, neighbors, and the world.

Section B: Mission

The mission of this Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who make disciples of Jesus Christ. This Church may from time to time adopt such vision, mission and values statements to more clearly and distinctly focus its ministries on accomplishing this mission.

Section C: Objectives

The objectives of this Church shall be:

1. To accurately preach, teach, and obey Scripture, and seek to live out scriptural principles, personally and corporately;
2. To carry the Gospel, the central message of Scripture, to families, friends, neighbors, and the world; and
3. To equip members for ministry, service, and evangelism.

ARTICLE III – STATEMENTS OF FAITH AND PRACTICE

Section A: Statement of Faith – General

We accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God and as the final authority in matters of faith, doctrine and Christian living. This Church accepts The Baptist Faith and Message as most recently adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention as an affirmation of our basic Christian beliefs and as a general statement of our faith.

Section B: Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Trinity Southern Baptist Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Senior Pastor, or in his absence, a person appointed by the Church Council Team, shall be the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Section C: Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within the person.

We believe the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18, 7:2-5, Hebrews 13:4). We believe God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Trinity Southern Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to Trinity Southern Baptist Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Trinity Southern Baptist Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16, Philippians 2:14-16, 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21, Romans 10:9-10, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We believe every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31, Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accordance with Scripture or the doctrines of Trinity Southern Baptist Church.

Section D: Ordinances

This Church acknowledges two biblical ordinances – Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper.

Section E: Bylaws and Scripture

These Bylaws and any amendments made hereto shall be the governing documents of this Church, but should always be interpreted and applied in conformity with the Bible.

Section F: Affirmation

Every pastor, staff member, and church member by virtue of their membership affirms agreement with Trinity Southern Baptist Church's Statements of Faith and practice as found in this Article and agrees to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with it.

ARTICLE IV – AUTONOMY AND AFFILIATIONS

Section A: Autonomy

This Church is an independent, self-governing, autonomous organization and is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body, acknowledging only the lordship of Christ, the direction of the Holy Spirit, and the authority of Scripture.

Section B: Affiliations

The church voluntarily cooperates with the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association, the California Southern Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, as well as the churches of like faith affiliated with those organizations.

1. **Cooperation** – This cooperation shall be demonstrated by contributing money through the regular budgets of such organizations, by electing and sending messengers to participate in their deliberations, by members serving on their boards and committees, and by adopting, if this Church deems proper, such recommendations or actions as may have been made or taken by them.
2. **Other Cooperative Efforts** – This Church also may cooperate with other churches and organizations as it may from time to time deem appropriate in order to accomplish its purpose.

ARTICLE V – GOVERNANCE

Section A: Congregational Rule

The governance of this Church is vested in the body. The membership retains the rights of self-governance in all phases of Church life. Any authority, privilege granted, or task assigned, shall be at the will of the Church and shall not be construed as irrevocably vesting such power or privilege in any individual, team, or organization.

Section B: Church Leadership

1. **Senior Pastor** – The Senior Pastor is responsible for leading the Church in the performance of its purposes. The pastor shall lead the congregation, the Ministry Staff Team, and the Church Council Team, to perform their respective tasks. The Senior Pastor shall be selected by the members according to these Bylaws.
2. **Pastoral Advisory Team** – The Pastoral Advisory Team is a group consisting of the Deacon Ministry Team Leader, and two other men selected by the Senior Pastor to meet regularly with ordained staff for prayer, counsel, and focus on Church purposes and objectives.
3. **Ministry Staff Team** – The Ministry Staff Team consists of paid and unpaid ministry leaders who meet regularly for strategy, communication, and coordination needs.
4. **Church Council Team** – The Church Council Team consists of the Senior Pastor as team leader, the Ministry Staff Team, and the leader from each Church team. The Church shall establish a Deacon Ministry Team, Personnel Team, Missions Team, and Finance Team. The Church Council Team may establish ongoing or temporary teams as needed to accomplish church purposes. (For more information see related Article on Teams.)
5. **Deacon Ministry Team** – In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament in Acts 6:1-4, Deacons are to be servants of the Church. Deacons serve with the Senior Pastor and staff in performing pastoral ministry tasks; proclaiming the gospel to unbelievers; caring for Church members and other persons in the community; and helping the Church achieve its mission. (For more information see Article X.)
6. **Trustees** – The Trustees serve as corporate officers. The trustees have representative signing authority as designated by the Church. The Trustees are chosen from individuals serving on the Finance Team and presented to the Church by the Church Council Team for election. (For more information see Article XI.)

ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP

Section A: General

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who have made a public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord; who have experienced believer's baptism in a manner consistent with Baptist faith and practice; who desire to be numbered among His disciples; and who are in agreement in both belief and practice with the Statement of Faith of this Church. Every member agrees to be spiritually accountable to the body and its elected leaders. The congregational body reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and the conditions of such membership.

Section B: Candidacy

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this Church. Prospective members will be voted on at a church business meeting. Candidates may be presented to the Church in one of the following ways:

1. **Profession of Faith** – By profession of faith in Christ and baptism by immersion, unless the candidate is physically unable to be immersed.
2. **Letter** – By transfer of membership from a church of like faith and order. A church of like faith and order shall be defined as an evangelical New Testament church, whose Statement of Faith and Practice does not conflict with the Statement of Faith and Practice of this Church.
3. **Statement** – By statement (when no letter of transfer is obtainable), that the candidate has professed faith in Jesus Christ, and has been baptized by immersion, unless the candidate was physically unable to be immersed.

Section C: Dissent

Should there be dissent by at least three voting members to a candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Pastoral Advisory Team for investigation, and a recommendation presented to the Church at the following business meeting. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of Church members present and voting shall be required to elect the candidate to membership.

Section D: Voting Rights of Members

Every member of the Church who is at least 16 years of age is entitled to vote at all elections and on all matters submitted to the Church in business meetings. There shall not, under any circumstance, be voting by proxy.

Section E: Cessation of Membership

Membership may be ended through death, transfer of membership to another church of like faith and order, at the member's request, affiliation with a church of another faith, or exclusion by action of the Church. Appropriate recommendations will be made to the Church at a business meeting to remove a person's name from membership. Only the Church shall have authority to add or remove persons from membership.

Section F: Records

The corporation shall keep:

1. **Financial Records** – Adequate and correct books and records of account;
2. **Corporate Records** – Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and minutes in written form of all business meetings;
3. **Membership List** – A record of members, detailing their names and addresses; and
4. **Giving Records** – Individual giving records for every contributor.

Section G: Inspection Rights

Any member of the Church may, at reasonable times and for a purpose reasonably related to such member's interest, inspect the Financial Records, Corporate Records, and Membership List. Members may not inspect Giving Records.

ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Section A: Place of Meetings

Meetings of the membership shall be held at any place designated by the Church, but if no other place is designated for a specific meeting, that meeting shall occur at the Church building located at 4890 East Holland Avenue, Fresno, California.

Section B: General Meetings

General meetings of members for worship, instruction, and fellowship shall be held at such times and places and upon such notice as may be determined by the Church.

Section C: Business Meetings

The Church will conduct business at regular and special meetings.

1. **Regular Meetings** – Frequency of regular meetings to conduct Church business shall be determined by the Church. The dates of the business meetings will be printed in the weekly church bulletin at least two (2) weeks in advance.
2. **Special Meetings** – A special meeting for business may be called by any of the following: the Pastoral Advisory Team, Church Council Team, or a majority of the Deacon Ministry Team.
 - a. **Notice** – If a special business meeting is called, at least two (2) weeks' notice must be provided to members by announcement at all Sunday morning worship services and printed in the weekly church bulletin.
 - b. **Business** – The specific purpose(s) of the proposed business to be transacted must be stated in the notice and only those matters shall be considered at the meeting.
3. **Voting** – A simple majority of members present and eligible to vote shall cause a matter to become official. The notice for any business meeting in which one of the following is to be discussed or voted upon shall include the specific matter to be discussed or voted upon. The following shall require a three-fourths (3/4) vote of Church members present and voting:
 - a. Calling or terminating a Senior Pastor;
 - b. Purchasing or selling real estate;
 - c. Dissolving the Church;
 - d. Incurring debt by way of a lien against the Church's real property;
 - e. Terminating affiliation with the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association, the California Southern Baptist Convention or the Southern Baptist Convention; or
 - f. Affiliating with any other association or convention of churches.
4. **Automatic Referral** – All new business brought to the floor in a business meeting shall automatically be referred to an appropriate standing team for consideration, unless two-thirds (2/3) of Church members present and voting object to the referral. If referred, the team may bring the motion back to the floor at a subsequent business meeting accompanied by a recommendation.

- 5 **Quorum** – The lesser of either one third (1/3) of the eligible voting members, or 30 eligible voting members, shall constitute a quorum.

Section D: Moderator

The Church Council Team will appoint a Moderator for Church business meetings annually. If the Moderator is absent, the members of the Church Council Team present will appoint a Moderator for that business meeting.

Section E: Robert's Rules of Order

The Moderator shall follow Robert's Rules of Order and seek the most efficient use of time.

ARTICLE VIII – PERSONNEL

Section A: Senior Pastor

1. **Qualifications** – The Senior Pastor must be a man who is ordained and meets the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The Church retains all authority to call or terminate a Senior Pastor.
2. **Leadership** – The Senior Pastor shall provide leadership in all areas of church life.
3. **Selection** – In the absence of a Senior Pastor, the Church Council Team will nominate a Senior Pastor Search Team consisting of seven (7) active members and two (2) alternates. The Senior Pastor Search Team nominees will be presented at a business meeting for election.
 - a. **Team** – The Senior Pastor Search Team shall choose its leadership. The Team shall develop a profile of characteristics desired in the new Senior Pastor after obtaining input from the Church. They shall prayerfully seek and investigate suitable prospects, conduct interviews, and communicate regularly with the Church about the process. The Senior Pastor Search Team shall serve until a new Senior Pastor is called.
 - b. **Vote** – The Church shall consider only one candidate at a time for Senior Pastor. The vote to call a Senior Pastor shall be by written ballot. The candidate must receive at least a three-fourths (3/4) vote of Church members present and voting to be called.
 - c. **Termination** – The Pastoral Advisory Team will investigate any matter that may cause concern over the leadership of the Senior Pastor. If the matter is not resolved, the Pastoral Advisory Team will present the issue to the Deacon Ministry Team. If the Pastoral Advisory Team and the Deacon Ministry Team together cannot resolve the issue, the matter is referred to the Personnel Team. After investigation, the Personnel Team may present a recommendation for termination. The vote to terminate a Senior Pastor shall be by written ballot. The recommendation to terminate must receive at least a three-fourths (3/4) vote of Church members present and voting.

Section B. Associate Ministers

The Senior Pastor and Personnel Team will recommend hiring Associates as needed to the Church at a business meeting. If necessary, a Team to search for the needed Associate may be nominated by the Church Council Team and elected by the church.

ARTICLE IX– TEAMS

This Church may establish as many ministries, organizations, and or teams as needed to carry out its purposes. The authority for establishing such ministries, organizations, and teams is given to the Church Council Team or by specific action of the Church.

1. **Team Leader** – The Church Council Team will nominate a Team Leader for all functioning teams except for the Pastor Search Team which will elect its own Leader from its team members;
2. **Assistant Team Leader and Secretary** – Each team may elect an Assistant Team Leader and Secretary.
3. **Accountability** – Each Team is accountable first to the Church Council Team, but ultimately to the Church for performance of its duties.
4. **Terms** – Members of ongoing teams shall serve a three-year term with one-third (1/3) of each team being elected annually.

ARTICLE X – DEACONS

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 a Deacon is to support the mission of the Church; the ministry of the Senior Pastor and staff; proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers; and care for Church members and other persons in the community.

Section A: Qualifications

Deacons shall be men who have been ordained as a Deacon by this Church or another church of like faith and order. Each Deacon should meet the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The Church retains all authority to elect or dismiss a Deacon, or to revoke the ordination of any Deacon ordained by this Church.

Section B: Terms

Deacons shall be elected to serve a three-year term on the Deacon Ministry Team. Deacons may serve (2) consecutive terms. After having served their term(s), one (1) year must lapse before the Deacon is eligible to serve another term.

Section C: Organization and Meetings

The Church Council Team shall nominate annually a team leader, assistant team leader, and secretary for the Deacon Ministry. The team leader shall work with the Senior Pastor to develop the agenda and priorities of the Deacon Ministry Team.

Section D: Selection of New Deacons

The Church Council Team will gather recommendations for new Deacons from the Senior Pastor, Deacons, or church members. The names of these men will be submitted to the Deacons for vetting. After vetting, those selected will be presented to the church at a regular business meeting for affirmation as Deacon candidates. If approved by the Church, candidates will begin the training process for ordination.

ARTICLE XI – TRUSTEES

The Trustees are the Corporate Officers of Trinity Southern Baptist Church Fresno, California. When the Church Council Team nominates the Finance Team to the church for election, it also will designate Finance Team members to serve as President, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Corporation. All Trustees must be members of this Church. The Trustees are designated as the Directors of this Corporation as defined and used in the California Corporations Code.

The Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, borrow money, incur indebtedness, or transfer any property on behalf of the Corporation without a specific vote of the Church authorizing such actions. The Trustees shall be responsible to sign such instruments and documents necessary or advisable in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation to carry out the directives of the Church.

ARTICLE XII – ASSETS

Section A: Dedication of Assets

The properties and assets of Trinity Southern Baptist Church Fresno, California are irrevocably dedicated to religious or charitable purposes. No part of the net earnings, properties, or assets of this corporation, on dissolution or otherwise, shall inure to the benefit of any private entity or individual, or any member or director of this Corporation.

Section B: Dissolution

If at any time this Church shall be dissolved or should cease to function as a cooperating Southern Baptist Church, the property and assets, both real and personal, shall be “held in Trust” by the California Southern Baptist Convention or its successor. The Convention in consultation with the Mid-Valley Southern Baptist Association, or its successor, shall act to preserve the property for Southern Baptist ministries in California, giving priority to needs related to Southern Baptist ministries in the current local Association area.

ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENTS

New Bylaws may be adopted or these Bylaws may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) approval of Church members present and voting at any business meeting, provided printed copies of the proposed changes have been distributed at least two weeks in advance.