



## **BYLAWS – MAY 2022 UPDATE SUMMARY**

### **ARTICLES OF FAITH**

Under Article II of the Constitution, we propose updating the date of the Baptist Faith and Message to reflect our acceptance of the current statement of faith adopted by Southern Baptist Churches. The most recent version of the Baptist Faith and Message was adopted on June 14, 2000, and can be read at [sbc.net/bfm2000](http://sbc.net/bfm2000).

### **NEW STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY**

In the Constitution, we propose adding a new Article VI, “Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality,” to read as follows:

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

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

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

We believe that to preserve the function and integrity of Faithbridge Church as a local expression of the Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical model to church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Faithbridge Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14–16; 1 Thess 5:22).

Since God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and himself, Faithbridge Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman.

Further, the pastors and staff of Faithbridge Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. The facilities and property of Faithbridge Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

We believe that 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; Rom 10:9–10; 1

Cor 6:9–11). We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity, regardless of their beliefs or lifestyle (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 nor the doctrines of Faithbridge Church.

### **NEW MEMBERSHIP COVENANT**

Under Article I, Section 3 “Church Membership: Lifestyle,” we propose replacing the original membership expectations with the following section. We believe this covenant better reflects the spirit of Christian fellowship than the previous one without adding extrabiblical requirements for church membership.

#### ***Original:***

Members are expected to:

- Demonstrate the love of God to one another and to the lost world as described in 1 Corinthians 13.
- Cheerfully and regularly contribute to the support of the ministry of the church, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel to all nations as commanded in Malachi 3:10 and 2 Corinthians 9:7.
- Accept the promise of Proverbs 22:6 by committing to maintain family and secret devotions, to religiously educate their children, and to seek the salvation of their family.
- Be determined not to bring reproach to the name of Christ or harm the witness of Simply Church by following the mandate of 1 Thessalonians 5:22 by abstaining from the appearance of evil. In abstaining from the appearance of evil they will avoid: excessive anger, slander, the sale and use of intoxicating beverages, and the abuse of other drugs; and they will be zealous in their efforts to advance the kingdom of God.
- Be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the commands of Jesus, in Matthew 5:23-24, to secure reconciliation without delay.
- Commit to continually pray for and encourage one another in the faith, to minister to one another in times of physical illness and times of personal crisis following Paul’s admonition in Galatians 6:2.
- Above all else, be committed to bring glory to God and the name of Christ through every word and deed as commanded in Matthew 5:16.

#### ***Proposed:***

As covenant members of Faithbridge Church, we agree to live according to the following biblical imperatives:

- The development and practice of personal and family spiritual disciplines.
- Consistent participation in corporate worship.
- Maintaining a lifestyle that is consistent with Scripture.
- Ongoing accountable relationships with other believers for the purpose of discipleship

- and mutual growth.
- The preservation of church unity in matters of non-essential beliefs or preferences.
  - Submission to the biblical leadership of the church and support of the church's leaders in prayer.
  - A willingness to pursue opportunities to serve in and through Faithbridge Church, especially in the use of one's spiritual gifts.
  - Active participation in and support of worldwide church planting efforts.
  - Giving generously and consistently to the support of the church in a manner that reflects the generosity shown to us in the gospel.

## **NEW SECTIONS ON INACTIVE MEMBERS AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

Under Article I "Church Membership," we propose adding a new Section 5 "Inactive Members" to read as follows:

Members who do not contribute to the church's support or participate in a small group or other Faithbridge ministry for longer than one year shall be contacted to determine the reason for their lack of participation in the life of the church. Unless good cause for such neglect can be shown, they shall be moved to an inactive membership status. If said members are unable to be contacted by phone, mail, or email, or if they do not respond to contact attempts for a period of 90 days, then they shall be moved to an inactive membership status.

If a member is moved to inactive status prior to the announcement of a duly called church conference, then said member will not be allowed to vote in that meeting or any subsequent meeting. After being deemed inactive, any member seeking to return to active membership status will be required to repeat the church membership process.

We also propose relocating part of Section 7 "Termination" to a new Section 6 "Church Discipline" for the sake of clarity and to minimize confusion.

## **ADDED MINISTRY TEAM REQUIREMENTS**

Under Article II "Church Organization," we propose adding requirements to Section 4 "Stewardship Ministry Team" and Section 5 "Personnel Ministry Team" to include that team members "must have been members of the church for at least one year" and be "actively engaged in the church's discipleship strategy (as defined by the Pastoral Staff)."

## **DEACON BODY**

Under Article II, Section 6 "Church Organization: Deacon Pastors," we propose updating the section title to "Deacon Body" and replacing the original section with the following one. By accepting this proposal, the language of "deacon pastor" will also be corrected throughout the document.

### ***Original:***

In accordance with the meaning of the word "deacon" as practiced in the New Testament, deacon pastors are to be servants of the church. The function of the deacon pastor is to

support and serve with the Pastor in performing the tasks of the church of worshipping, evangelizing, discipling, ministering, and fellowshiping.

Any male, age twenty-one or over, who is a member of Simply Church and who meets the scriptural requirements of a deacon as found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:3 is eligible to be nominated as deacon pastor.

The basic Biblical qualifications for deacons shall include, but not be limited to:

- Filled with the Holy Spirit - Acts 6:3
- Strong Christian Character - 1 Timothy 3:8-10
- Husband of One Wife - 1 Timothy 3:12
- Tither of His Income - 1 Timothy 3:8, Malachi 3:10
- Proven to the Church - 1 Timothy 3:10
- Faithful to Attend Worship - Hebrews 10:25
- Truthful and Trustworthy - 1 Timothy 3:8
- Sound and Wise Judgment - Acts 6:2
- Example of Christian Home Life - 1 Timothy 3:12
- Supportive of the Pastor and His Ministry - Acts 6:1-7
- Teacher of Scripture - 1 Timothy 3:2

The number of deacon pastors shall be based on the needs of the church. The needs of the church in regard to the number of deacon pastors shall be determined by the Deacon Body and the Senior Pastor.

Through the Small Group classes each year the church will seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit in nominating men to serve as a deacon pastor. The classes will be encouraged to choose men in their Small Group who exemplify Christ by their servant's attitude and are already serving in the class. The Senior Pastor, staff and current deacon pastors may also nominate anyone to serve who meets the qualifications of deacon pastor at any time a new class is developed or a vacancy occurs. As men are nominated their worship attendance, Bible Study attendance, visitation habits and tithing will be evaluated.

When the evaluation of each man is complete, a letter will then be sent to each nominee to see if they feel they can commit to serve as deacon pastor at Simply Church. The Deacon Pastor Screening Team will meet with each nominee who is willing to commit to serve to further determine the nominee's eligibility. The nominee's wife (if married) will also be a part of the evaluation, as it is important that the wife understands her part in serving alongside her husband. The Deacon Pastor Screening Team will be composed of the Deacon Pastor Chairman, Deacon Pastor Vice-Chairman, the Senior Pastor, and any other deacon pastor who is asked to serve by the Deacon Pastor Chairman. Once the screening is complete, the Senior Pastor or Deacon Pastor Chairman will advise the church as to the propriety of the candidate and proceed with the ordination.

The Senior Pastor and the Deacon Pastor Chairman shall immediately remove any deacon pastor who fails to fulfill the basic Biblical qualifications as stated above from the active Deacon Body.

***Proposed:***

In accordance with the meaning of the word “deacon” as practiced in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The function of the Deacon Body is to support and serve with the Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff in performing the tasks of the church of worshiping, evangelizing, discipling, ministering, and creating Christian fellowship.

New deacons are nominated by the church through the small group ministry and appointed by the Senior Pastor. Any male, age twenty-one or over, who has been a member of Faithbridge Church for at least two years, and who meets the scriptural requirements of a deacon as found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 is eligible to be nominated as a deacon. The number of deacons shall be based on the needs of the church as determined by the Senior Pastor and the active Deacon Body.

As men are nominated, their worship attendance, Bible Study attendance, tithing record, and other pertinent items will be evaluated. Nominees will then be tested to determine their overall character and fitness for the role in accordance with Scripture. Once this testing process has been completed, the Senior Pastor or Deacon Chairman will advise the church as to the propriety of the candidate and proceed with ordination.

Deacons shall serve terms of three years, at the end of which they may be reappointed for a second term. A deacon shall be allowed to serve two consecutive terms, after which a lapse of one year must occur before he may be considered for reappointment. Terms shall be staggered such that an even number of terms end in each year.

In the event of a vacancy among the Deacon Body, the Senior Pastor shall appoint a qualified individual to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term or else leave the position vacant. If the term to be filled is less than 12 months, the deacon filling the vacancy shall be eligible to serve up to two additional consecutive terms.

Deacons may be removed by resignation or by dismissal. Any deacon electing to resign from his position with the active Deacon Body is asked to provide notice of at least four (4) weeks to the Senior Pastor and/or Deacon Chairman. The Senior Pastor and Deacon Chairman may remove any deacon from the active Deacon Body who fails to fulfill the basic duties of his position or live up to the biblical qualifications of the role.

**OTHER MINOR CHANGES**

Other updates are proposed to correct minor grammatical issues and update outdated language and ministry practices. For example, we propose updating Article I, Section 8 “Church Membership: Records” to state that records be held by the church office, not education secretary, which is how the church currently operates.

Unless referring to the official name of the corporation, Simply Church has been changed to Faithbridge Church.

The Bylaws were also updated to include a Table of Contents, and article, paragraph, and subparagraph entitlements have been inserted for convenience in referencing.

**\*\*A complete copy of the Constitution and Bylaws with proposed changes is available at the Welcome Desks and [fbjax.com](http://fbjax.com).**

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**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**  
SIMPLY CHURCH, INC. D/B/A FAITHBRIDGE CHURCH

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# CONSTITUTION – SIMPLY CHURCH, INC. D/B/A FAITHBRIDGE CHURCH

## PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist churches, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to the churches of the same faith and order, we do declare and establish this constitution.

## ARTICLE I. NAME

This body shall be known as and operate under the corporate name of “Simply Church, Inc. d/b/a Faithbridge Church.”

Whenever it is desirable to abbreviate the name of this organization, the name, Faithbridge Church or Faithbridge shall be considered in every way the legal name of the church corporation.

Whenever the word “church” is used in these Bylaws or their amendments or other official action of the church corporation, it shall signify the legal organization of this church as established in the Articles of Incorporation and herein. References to votes or affirmations of the church shall have reference to a vote of the members of this church corporation.

## ARTICLE II. ARTICLES OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God and is the basis for our faith. This church accepts *The Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on ~~May 9, 1963~~ June 14, 2000. The church is a committed body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ and is committed to personally sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The church follows our Lord Jesus Christ in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

## ARTICLE III. MINISTRY COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, joyfully enter into this ministry covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

**We believe we must discover the activity of God and adjust to it.**

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).*

**We believe churches grow warmer through fellowship, deeper through discipleship, stronger through worship, broader through ministry, and larger through evangelism.**

*“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So, continuing daily with*

*one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42–47).*

**We believe everything must be undergirded with prayer.**

*“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Matthew 7:7–8).*

**We believe we must walk by faith. The bottom line is not “can we afford it,” but “is it God’s will?”**

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).*

**We believe everything should be done in light of the mission statement.**

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20).*

**We believe all matters of faith and practice are to be subjected to Scripture.**

*“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17).*

**We believe the church is a hospital for sinners, not a country club for saints. Since all sin and make mistakes, an attitude and atmosphere of grace must abound.**

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me. Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18–19).*

**We believe conflict should be dealt with biblically. Criticism, murmuring, and slander must not be allowed to disrupt the fellowship. The deacons should act as peacemakers.** *“Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:15–20).*

**We believe faithful ministry requires hard work ~~is necessary~~ and sacrifice.**

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1–2).*

**We believe lifestyle ministry should characterize our church. Ministry is more important**

than meetings, and our calendar should reflect it. (*Jesus in Gospels*)

*“And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42–47).*

**We believe there must be constant adjustment for growth. We cannot get overly comfortable. We must create new Bible study units, new ministries and constantly improve the quality of our education.**

*“Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited” (Isaiah 54:2–3).*

**We believe that time is short; therefore, we must maximize our efforts and always do the what is most important.**

*“... redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).*

**We believe each Christian should discover his or her gifts, passions, and ministry.**

*“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:4–8).*

**We believe we must seek to understand our cultural context and minister to it. Biblical doctrine is non-negotiable; methods are open to evaluation.**

*“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:19–22).*

**We believe we should strive for quality in every arena of our ministry.**

*“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31).  
“Then the king said to Araunah, ‘No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.’ So, David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver” (2 Samuel 24:24).*

**We believe the Senior Pastor and church staff should be allowed to initiate and lead with the trust, support, and prayers of the church.**

*“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for*

you” (Hebrews 13:17).

**We believe that a healthy, growing church requires a growing staff team.**

*“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11–12).*

**We believe the family unit must be strengthened.**

*“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4–9).*

**We believe outreach must be a priority.**

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:17–21).*

**We believe that building relationships within our circles of influence is essential to meeting the spiritual needs of people.**

*“And the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them’” (Luke 15:2).*

**We believe God has called us to be a lighthouse ministry to all of Jacksonville and the world.**

*“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14–16).*

#### **ARTICLE IV. GOVERNANCECHARACTER**

This church is an independent, autonomous, Southern Baptist church with full and final authority to determine solely within itself all matters related to the life of this church including, but not limited to, its financial affairs, affiliations, ownership and uses of property, and pastoral leadership.

~~The government of this church is vested in the body of baptized believers (members) who compose it. This church will be, and is always to be, an autonomous Baptist church, self-governing on all matters, by a majority of the body of members who compose it, and recognizes and sustains the~~

obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist churches. In no way is this to be understood to mean that such cooperation or affiliation shall ever become one of the doctrines and/or tenets of this church. The government of this church shall be congregational in nature, and the final authority for the operation and management of the affairs of this corporation, spiritual and temporal, shall be vested in the membership of the corporation, which authority shall be exercised in the manner set forth in the Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE V. DOCTRINE**

This church receives the Scriptures (Holy Bible) as its sole authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of the Baptist churches as indicated in the Articles of Faith referred to in Article II. As stated in the Articles of Faith above, the Bible stands as the final authority for all matters of faith and practice in the church. For purposes of the church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the Senior Pastor shall serve as the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

## **ARTICLE VI. STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY**

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

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

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

We believe that to preserve the function and integrity of Faithbridge Church as a local expression of the Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical model to church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Faithbridge Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14–16; 1 Thess 5:22).

Since God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and himself, Faithbridge Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman.

Further, the pastors and staff of Faithbridge Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. The facilities and property of Faithbridge Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

We believe that 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; Rom 10:9–10; 1 Cor 6:9–11). We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity, regardless of their beliefs or lifestyle (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 nor the doctrines of Faithbridge Church.



# **BYLAWS – SIMPLY CHURCH, INC. D/B/A FAITHBRIDGE CHURCH**

## **ARTICLE I. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1. GENERAL**

- 1.1(1) This local body of believers is an autonomous Southern 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.
- 1.1(2) The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

### **SECTION 2. QUALIFICATIONS**

- 1.2(1) Any person may offer himself ~~/or~~ herself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church for membership in any of the following ways:
- (a) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
  - (b) By promise of letter from another Southern Baptist church.
  - (c) Upon statement of prior conversion experience through faith followed by baptism by immersion in a church of like faith. (A church of like faith shall always be determined at the discretion of the ~~office of the~~ Senior-Pastor.)
- 1.2(2) The membership of this church shall consist of such persons as confess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord and who (1) after due examination by the church as to their Christian experience, and if coming from another Southern Baptist church, the receipt of an acceptable letter of recommendation or satisfactory substitute, (2) have been baptized by immersion, (3) and have completed ~~Class 101 (the~~ New Members ~~Class)~~.
- 1.2(3) Should there be any question about a candidate's qualifications for membership that might require prayer, thought, or study, or if there is any dissent as to any candidate, such question or dissent shall be referred to the Senior Pastor, and at his discretion, to the Pastoral Staff ~~Deacon-pastors~~ for resolution.

### **SECTION 3. LIFESTYLE**

- 1.3(1) The membership of this church shall consist of individuals who display in their lifestyle that they are committed to be salt and light in accordance with Matthew 5:1–16.

~~Members are expected to:~~

~~Demonstrate the love of God to one another and to the lost world as described in 1 Corinthians 13. Cheerfully and regularly contribute to the support of the ministry of the church, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel to all nations as commanded in Malachi 3:10 and 2 Corinthians 9:7.~~

~~Accept the promise of Proverbs 22:6 by committing to maintain family and secret devotions, to religiously educate their children, and to seek the salvation of their family.~~

~~Be determined not to bring reproach to the name of Christ or harm the witness of Simply Church by following the mandate of 1 Thessalonians 5:22 by abstaining from the appearance of evil. In abstaining from the appearance of evil they will avoid: excessive anger, slander, the sale and use of intoxicating beverages, and the abuse of other drugs; and They will be zealous in their efforts to advance the kingdom of God.~~

~~Be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the commands of Jesus, in Matthew 5:23-24, to secure reconciliation without delay.~~

~~Commit to continually pray for and encourage one another in the faith, to minister to one another in times of physical illness and times of personal crisis following Paul's admonition in Galatians 6:2.~~

~~Above all else, be committed to bring glory to God and the name of Christ through every word and deed as commanded in Matthew 5:16.~~

1.3(2) As covenant members of Faithbridge Church, we agree to live according to the following biblical imperatives:

- The development and practice of personal and family spiritual disciplines.
- Consistent participation in corporate worship.
- Maintaining a lifestyle that is consistent with Scripture.
- Ongoing accountable relationships with other believers for the purpose of discipleship and mutual growth.
- The preservation of church unity in matters of non-essential beliefs or preferences.
- Submission to the biblical leadership of the church and support of the church's leaders in prayer.
- A willingness to pursue opportunities to serve in and through Faithbridge Church, especially in the use of one's spiritual gifts.
- Active participation in and support of worldwide church planting efforts.
- Giving generously and consistently to the support of the church in a manner that reflects the generosity shown to us in the gospel.

## **SECTION 4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

1.4(1) As reflected in the membership covenant above, M~~m~~embers of Faithbridge Church are expected to be faithful and obedient in all areas of the Christian life; ~~They are expected to~~ attend the regular services of the ~~is~~ church, vote in church conferences, give regularly to its support, and participate in its ministries.

1.4(2) The membership covenant guides the church's commitment to one another. It represents a promise to watch over one another in love according to all that the Bible commands; to pray for one another in all circumstances while coming to one another's aid in sin and distress; to rejoice in our mutual salvation and gifts received from God; and to love and serve one another, being slow to take offense, always ready to forgive and reconcile, following the example and teachings of Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **SECTION 5. INACTIVE MEMBERS**

1.5(1) Members who do not contribute to the church's support or participate in a small group or other Faithbridge ministry for longer than one year shall be contacted to determine the

reason for their lack of participation in the life of the church. Unless good cause for such neglect can be shown, they shall be moved to an inactive membership status. If said members are unable to be contacted by phone, mail, or email, or if they do not respond to contact attempts for a period of 90 days, then they shall be moved to an inactive membership status.

- 1.5(2) If a member is moved to inactive status. If the member has not attended a Small Group Bible Study class for at least one year prior to the announcement of a duly called church conference special called business meeting, then said member will not be allowed to vote in that meeting or any subsequent meeting. After being deemed inactive, any member seeking to return to active membership status will be required to repeat the church membership process.

## **SECTION 6. CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

- 1.6(1) Any member having cause or complaint against another must first seek to address it as directed in Matthew 18. If this attempt is not sufficient, the complaint shall be brought to the attention and counsel of the Senior Pastor, who may report his findings and recommend to the church appropriate action, even to the point of termination of membership. All church discipline shall be formulated and carried out in the Spirit of Christ with the goal being reconciliation to the body of Christ.

## **SECTION 7. TERMINATION**

- 1.7(1) Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (a) Death<sub>:-</sub>
- (b) Dismissal to another Baptist church<sub>:-</sub>
- (c) Affiliation with a church of another denomination<sub>:-</sub>
- (d) ~~Exclusion because of unchristian conduct~~Result of church discipline (Matthew 18:15–22)<sub>:-</sub>
- (e) By request of member desiring his termination.

~~(f)~~–1.7(2)

All requests for recommendations as to the termination of a member under item (d) above shall first be brought to the attention of the Senior Pastor, and after consideration of the matter, either the Senior Pastor or his duly appointed representative should confer with the individual subject to said termination.

- 1.7(3) ~~and only after~~Once faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance without success, shall the Senior Pastor may recommend to the church that the membership of said person be terminated.
- 1.7(4) The member subject to termination will be notified in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the recommendation that his or her membership be terminated. Such recommendation will be presented to the church at a church conference. Action to terminate will be taken upon an affirmative vote of the church in conference.

## SECTION ~~86~~. RECORDS

- 1.8 The ~~education-secretary-church office~~ shall keep an accurate roll of all members, and insofar as possible, an up-to-date record of addresses.

## ARTICLE II. CHURCH ORGANIZATION

### SECTION 1. GENERAL

- 2.1(1) Faithbridge Church is to be recognized as a Jesus ruled, pastor led, and congregationally accountable church in accordance with the principles laid down in the New Testament.
- 2.1(2) The church is both a spiritual body and a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Florida. The church is subject to the authority of Scripture in all matters and subject to the rules of duly constituted public authority (Romans 13:1–7). The church organization is to provide the mechanism for the orderly activity of the church body.

### SECTION 2. CHURCH MEETINGS

- 2.2(1) The spiritual church shall meet in regular worship services each Sunday at such times and place as may be determined by the Senior Pastor. Additionally, the church may meet at such other dates and times as may be deemed appropriate by the Senior Pastor for purpose of worship, edification, and proclamation. In the event the church is without a Senior Pastor, ~~the Pastoral Staff~~the Deacons may determine special times of worship.
- 2.2(2) ~~The corporate church shall meet in a duly called church conference for the purpose of conducting the business of the church. Any business of the church, which requires approval by and through its members, shall be conducted on the church premises in a duly called church conference.~~
- 2.2(3) The Senior Pastor or the Deacon ~~Pastor~~ Chairman may call the church into conferences by announcing the purpose of the conference during Sunday morning worship services on two consecutive weeks.
- 2.2(4) The Moderator at the church conference shall be the Senior Pastor or his designee, provided the church has a Senior Pastor. If the church has no Senior Pastor, or in the event the Senior Pastor or his designee is absent, the Deacon Chairman or, in his absence, the Deacon Vice-Chairman, shall call the church to order, ~~and~~ nominations from the floor shall be received, and a Moderator Pro-Temp shall be elected.
- 2.2(5) The Moderator is to utilize *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* for the purpose of conducting meetings and may appoint a Parliamentarian if he determines such appointment to be appropriate. The Moderator may bring such matters before the conference as he determines to be appropriate.
- 2.2(6) ~~At least annually, t~~The following matters shall be brought before the church in conference for affirmation:

- ~~1. A slate of proposed members of the Stewardship Ministry Team and Personnel Ministry Team as may be necessary to fill vacancies in those bodies.~~
- ~~2. Any proposed change to the Church Constitution and Bylaws.~~
- ~~3. Any proposed action by a duly constituted Pastor Search Team or the Personnel Ministry Team.~~
- ~~4. An annual church budget.~~

- (a) The budget; (the annual overall operating expenditures of the church);
- (b) The purchase or sale of real property;
- (c) The assumption of any loan or encumbrance;
- (d) Amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, or Articles of Incorporation;
- (e) The plan of merger, consolidation, or dissolution and any amendments thereafter; any matter related to disassociation of the church from the Southern Baptist Convention, the Florida Baptist Convention, or First Coast Churches (formerly Jacksonville Baptist Association); any merger or consolidation with any other Baptist convention, fellowship, or association;
- (f) The recommendation to call, appoint, or terminate a Senior Pastor or Interim Pastor;
- (g) Terminating membership as a result of church discipline;
- ~~(a)(h)~~ Any transfer of authority, even temporarily, to another church or entity.

- 2.2(7) Any matter presented to the church in conference for action shall require a simple majority vote of the active members in attendance, excepting item (f) above which shall require a 75% majority vote. Members in attendance at a ~~duly-called~~duly called or regular meeting of the church in conference shall be deemed to constitute a legal quorum. Matters dealing with personnel, finance, or leadership must be referred to the appropriate ministry team before the church can take action.

### SECTION 3. OFFICERS

- 2.3(1) The affairs of this corporation shall be administered by its officers, which shall be President, Vice President, and Secretary. The Senior Pastor shall serve as President, the Deacon ~~Pastor~~ Chairman shall serve as Vice President, and the Secretary shall be designated by the Senior Pastor.

- 2.3(2) The duties of the Officers are:

- (a) The Officers shall be the legal representatives and as such are given authority to execute deeds, mortgages, liens, and other legal documents as directed by the church, but shall have no authority or privileges to buy, sell, or mortgage, ~~etc.~~ any property without approval of the church.
- (b) The Officers shall give supervision and maintain any deeds, bonds, insurance policies, and important papers of the church. They are further authorized to receive and disburse moneys in accordance with terms of wills, bequests, and special instruments wherein the church is named beneficiary.

### SECTION 4. STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY TEAM

- 2.4(1) The Stewardship Ministry Team is composed of seven (7) members. Its primary function is to continuously review the financial affairs of the church, to provide a level of stewardship accountability for the church staff to the church membership.
- 2.4(2) This team ~~meets monthly~~ will meet regularly to review the financial statements prepared by the staff, to consider the accounting and financial systems of the church, and to measure actual financial operations to budgeted amounts.
- 2.4(3) The Stewardship Ministry Team, along with the Senior Pastor (or his designee), will develop a proposed budget for the church fiscal year, utilizing staff input and recommendations of the Personnel Ministry Team. The Stewardship Ministry Team and Senior Pastor (or his designee) will then formulate a proposed budget, which is then presented to the church in conference for church membership approval.
- 2.4(4) Stewardship Ministry Team Members of this team are to serve for a three-year term with at least two members rotating off the team each year, and each year Members must wait at least one year before they may be considered for reappointment. The Senior Pastor and/or his designee staff will ~~nominate~~ appoint persons to fill vacancies that will occur during that year.
- 2.4(5) Members of the Stewardship Ministry Team must have been members of the church for at least one year, actively engaged in the church's discipleship strategy (as defined by the Pastoral Staff), and will be expected to lead in setting a biblical example of stewardship by tithing at least 10% of their income to the church.

## SECTION 5. PERSONNEL MINISTRY TEAM

- 2.5(1) The Personnel Ministry Team is a seven (7) member team ~~one of whom must be a member of The chairperson of~~ the Stewardship Ministry Team shall serve as an ex officio member of this team. The function of the Personnel Ministry Team is to assist the Senior Pastor or his designee in determining the staffing and compensation levels of the church staff and in compiling and maintaining a Personnel Policy Manual.
- (a) Changes in pastoral ministerial staff positions are to be submitted to the church in conference for approval.
  - (b) Changes in compensation amounts must have Senior Pastor approval. If compensation changes result in an increase to the church budget, such changes are submitted to the Stewardship Ministry Team, which is then responsible for any required proposal to the church in conference.
- 2.5(2) ~~The~~ Personnel Ministry Team members are to serve for a three-year term and with at least two ~~positions are to become vacant for action members rotating off the team~~ each year. Members must wait at least one year before they may be considered for reappointment. The Senior Pastor and/or his designee will appoint new persons to fill vacancies that will occur during that year.

- 2.5(3) Members of the Personnel Ministry Team must have been members of the church for at least one year, actively engaged in the church's discipleship strategy (as defined by the Pastoral Staff), and will be expected to lead in setting a biblical example of stewardship by tithing at least 10% of their income to the church.
- 2.5(4) Additionally, the Personnel Ministry Team will be asked to advise and counsel the Senior Pastor in interviews of prospective ~~ministerial~~ staff members, employee benefit program considerations, personnel evaluations, and other personnel-related matters.

## SECTION 6. DEACON BODY PASTORS

- 2.6(1) In accordance with the meaning of the word "deacon" as practiced in the New Testament, deacons ~~pastors~~ are to be servants of the church. The function of the deacon ~~pastor~~ is to support and serve with the Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff in performing the tasks of the church of worshiping, evangelizing, discipling, ministering, and creating Christian fellowship~~fellowshipping~~.
- 2.6(2) New deacons are nominated by the church through the small group ministry and appointed by the Senior Pastor. Any male, age twenty-one or over, who ~~is~~ has been a member of SimplyFaithbridge Church for at least two years, and who meets the scriptural requirements of a deacon as found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, ~~Titus and Acts 6:3~~ is eligible to be nominated as a deacon~~pastor~~.

~~The basic Biblical qualifications for deacons shall include, but not be limited to:~~

~~Filled with the Holy Spirit—Acts 6:3  
 Strong Christian Character—1 Timothy 3:8-10  
 Husband of One Wife—1 Timothy 3:12  
 Tithing of His Income—1 Timothy 3:8, Malachi 3:10  
 Proven to the Church—1 Timothy 3:10  
 Faithful to Attend Worship—Hebrews 10:25  
 Truthful and Trustworthy—1 Timothy 3:8  
 Sound and Wise Judgment—Acts 6:2  
 Example of Christian Home Life—1 Timothy 3:12  
 Supportive of the Pastor and His Ministry—Acts 6:1-7  
 Teacher of Scripture—1 Timothy 3:2~~

The number of deacons ~~pastors~~ shall be based on the needs of the church. ~~The needs of the church in regard to the number of deacon pastors shall be as~~ determined by the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Body~~and the Senior Pastor~~.

- 2.6(3) ~~Through the Small Group classes each year the church will seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit in nominating men to serve as a deacon pastor. The classes will be encouraged to choose men in their Small Group who exemplify Christ by their servant's attitude and are already serving in the class. The Senior Pastor, staff and current deacon pastors may also nominate anyone to serve who meets the qualifications of deacon pastor at any time a new class is developed or a vacancy occurs. As men are nominated, their worship attendance, Bible Study attendance, visitation habits and tithing~~ record, and other pertinent items will be evaluated.



~~When the evaluation of each man is complete, a letter will then be sent to each nominee to see if they feel they can commit to serve as deacon pastor at Simply Church. The Deacon Pastor Screening Team will meet with each nominee who is willing to commit to serve to further determine the nominee's eligibility. The nominee's wife (if married) will also be a part of the evaluation, as it is important that the wife understands her part in serving alongside her husband. The Deacon Pastor Screening Team will be composed of the Deacon Pastor Chairman, Deacon Pastor Vice Chairman, the Senior Pastor, and any other deacon pastor who is asked to serve by the Deacon Pastor Chairman. Nominees will then be tested to determine their overall character and fitness for the role in accordance with Scripture. Once this the screening/testing process is has been completed, the Senior Pastor or Deacon Pastor Chairman will advise the church as to the propriety of the candidate and proceed with the ordination.~~

- 2.6(4) Deacons shall serve terms of three years, at the end of which they may be reappointed for a second term. A deacon shall be allowed to serve two consecutive terms, after which a lapse of one year must occur before he may be considered for reappointment. Terms shall be staggered such that an even number of terms end in each year.
- 2.6(5) In the event of a vacancy among the Deacon Body, the Senior Pastor shall appoint a qualified individual to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term or else leave the position vacant. If the term to be filled is less than 12 months, the deacon filling the vacancy shall be eligible to serve up to two additional consecutive terms.
- 2.6(6) Deacons may be removed by resignation or by dismissal. He may elect to resign from his position with the active Deacon Body by a notice of at least four (4) weeks to the Senior Pastor and/or Deacon Chairman, or the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Pastor Chairman shall immediately may remove any deacon-pastor from the active Deacon Body who fails to fulfill the basic duties of his position or live up to the basic-biblical qualifications of the role-as stated above from the active Deacon Body.

### ARTICLE III. SENIOR PASTOR

#### SECTION 1. THE PASTOR

By virtue of his calling and office, the Senior Pastor is the spiritual leader of the church and President of the Corporation. He shall be ~~elected~~ called to serve for an indefinite period of time and may terminate his position with the church by a notice of at least two (2) weeks, or the church may terminate his position by a notice of at least ninety (90) days.

In the event of a vacancy in the position of Pastor, a replacement or interim shall be considered by a Pastor Search Team consisting of at least five (5) persons elected by the church in conference from nominations by the Deacons Body from members in good standing willing to serve. This team shall consider the scriptural qualifications of potential pastors. After due consideration, the Pastor Search Team shall recommend a man to the church for approval or disapproval by written ballot. Only one name will be considered at a time. Approval by at least a ~~three-fourths~~ 75% majority of those active members present and voting represents the acknowledgment of God's calling of the Senior Pastor.

The Senior Pastor shall serve as the preacher and senior Bible teacher by virtue of his calling. The



~~Senior p~~Pastor, or his designee, shall be considered an ex-officio member, without vote, of all teams and serve as the Church Moderator. The Senior Pastor shall oversee the total ministry of the church.

The Senior Pastor shall have the authority to appoint special study groups, teams, or task forces to serve for a specified period of time to assist the church in accomplishing the Great Commission.

The Senior Pastor is responsible for the church staff who assume his delegated responsibilities. Each staff member serves as an extension of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor, in counsel with the Personnel Ministry Team, may remove, replace, or realign existing staff positions as he deems necessary and appropriate.

## ARTICLE IV. CHURCH MINISTRIES

The ministries of the church are to be consistent with the Ministry Covenant and Articles of Faith. They are to be under the supervision of the Senior Pastor, or his ~~designee~~designated church staff member. Aside from Pastors, other church staff members may be hired as necessary to facilitate the ministries of the church. All church staff members must adhere to the Articles of Faith.

In order for a ministry to be considered as a ministry of the church, it must be under the scriptural authority of the church so as to ~~insure~~ ensure appropriate accountability, integrity, and management of such ministries.

## ARTICLE V. GENERAL

### SECTION 1. LICENSING AND ORDINATION

- 5.1 The Senior Pastor, Pastoral Staff, and Deacon ~~Body pastors~~ are authorized by the church to license individuals who give evidence that they are called to the work of the ministry. The Senior Pastor or the Deacon ~~Pastor~~ Chairman shall also possess the right to convene an ordination council to examine the qualifications of a candidate (deacons or ministers), advise the church as to the propriety of the candidate, and proceed with the ordination.

### ~~SECTION 2. ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS~~

~~This Constitution and Bylaws shall be considered adopted and will become effective October 9, 1997, upon affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present at a church conference. The adoption shall effect a repeal of all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith.~~

### SECTION ~~23~~. FISCAL YEAR

- 5.2 The Church hereby adopts the calendar year as its fiscal year.

### SECTION ~~34~~. AMENDMENTS

- 5.3(1) This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended at any regular or called church conference by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those members present and voting, provided written notice of such amendment stating the proposed change has been given to the membership of the church two weeks prior to the date of the meeting for voting on the change.
- 5.3(2) The ~~Secretary~~church office shall keep a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws, along with amendments to or revisions thereof. Up-to-date copies shall also be made available to any church member upon request.

#### **SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE**

- 5.4 This Constitution and Bylaws shall be considered adopted and will become effective October 9, 1997, upon affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present at a church conference. The adoption shall repeal and replace all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith.

**Business Meeting to Approve Amended Version: May 15, 2022**