

# BYLAWS OF GREAT BRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH

## I. Membership

### Section 1. General

Great Bridge Baptist Church (the "Church") is a sovereign and democratic Southern Baptist church consisting of its members and implementing the Church's constitution under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this Church.

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

### Section 2. Candidacy

The Church is a fellowship of believers that extends a welcome to every believer. All such believers desiring membership shall be presented to the Church at any regular worship service in any of the following ways:

- (1) By profession of faith and for believer's baptism according to the policies of this Church;
- (2) By promise of a letter from another Southern Baptist church;
- (3) By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and believer's baptism by immersion when no letter is obtainable; or
- (4) By watchcare. (Watchcare is available to short-term residents in the area who wish to affiliate with the Church without membership or minor children not yet making a profession of faith. Those in watchcare are not eligible to vote, hold elected office, or serve on administrative ministry teams.)

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate for membership, such dissent shall be referred to the Pastor and the Deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the Church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at any regular worship service shall be required to elect candidates to membership.

### Section 3. New Member Orientation

New members of this Church are expected to participate in the Church's new member orientation.

### Section 4. Rights of Members

Every member (except those in watchcare) of the Church is entitled to vote in all elections and on all questions submitted to the members of the Church provided the member is present in person. Members of the Church may not vote by proxy.

Every member (except those in watchcare) of the Church is eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for elective office in the Church as defined in these Bylaws.

### Section 5. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) death of the member, (2) letter to another Southern Baptist church, (3) exclusion by action of the members of the Church, (4) affiliation with a church of another faith or denomination, or (5) by resignation.

### Section 6. Discipline

It shall be the practice of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, other members of the Church staff, and Deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exist that would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the Church, the Pastor and the Deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the Church to take action to exclude a member, a three-fourths vote of the members present at a meeting at which there is a quorum shall be required; and upon such a vote the Church

may proceed to declare the person to be no longer a member of the Church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The Church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at any meeting of the members of the Church at which there is a quorum, upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

## **II. Church Officers**

All church officers must be members of the Church. Except as specifically provided below with respect to the Pastor, any officer may be removed from an office with or without cause by a vote of the majority of members present and voting at any regular or special church conference the notice for which stated that the removal would be considered at the conference. The officers of this Church shall be as follows:

### **Section 1. Pastor**

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

The Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least ten (10) days' notice shall be given.

A Pastor Search Ministry Team shall be appointed by the Church to seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendations will constitute a nomination, though any member has the privilege of making other nominations according to the policy established by the Church. The Pastoral Search Ministry Team shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one candidate at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present at a meeting called for that purpose shall be required. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the Church's request. The Pastor may relinquish the office as pastor by giving at least thirty (30) days' notice to the Church at the time of resignation.

The Church may declare the office of Pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least ten (10) days' notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the Personnel Ministry Team and the Deacons or by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the Church members. The Moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and he shall be someone other than the Pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot; an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant.

Except in instances of gross misconduct by the Pastor so excluded from office, the Church will compensate the Pastor with not less than one-twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate, and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than 30 days.

### **Section 2. Church Ministerial Staff**

The ministerial staff shall be called and employed according to the needs of the Church. Ministerial staff requires evidence of a personal call of God to ministry, recommendation of the Personnel Ministry Team, and church action at a special or regular church conference. Job descriptions and compensatory rules for each position will be written by the Personnel Ministry Team and approved by the Church by secret ballot with a three-fourths affirmative vote of those present. Ministerial staff members may relinquish their position by giving at least two weeks notice to the Church at the time of resignation.

The church ministerial staff is called of God, and they are to labor secure in the knowledge that a change in senior leadership in no way threatens their continued service to the church body. In an effort to provide such security, the ministerial staff shall serve Great Bridge Baptist Church as long as the call of God for ministry in this Church is evident upon their lives and shall continue to fulfill that call even in the event of pastoral changes. This provision in no way prohibits the church body from dismissing ministerial staff under the provisions outlined below,

but ensures that the calling of a new pastor does not result in wholesale changes in the ministerial staff because of personal preferences the new Pastor may have for the staff. The ministerial staff shall be defined as Minister of Music and Worship, Minister of Education and Outreach, Minister of Youth, Preschool Minister, Children's Minister, and any future staff positions that the Church deems necessary in the ministry of the local church.

In the event of gross misconduct or failure to fulfill the duties of the ministerial position, the Church may vote to vacate such positions upon recommendation of the Personnel Ministry Team and the Deacons. Such termination shall be immediate, and the compensation conditions shall be the same as for the Pastor.

### **Section 3. Deacons**

There may be one deacon for every 50 members on the church roll. Deacons shall be elected by the members in a regular or special called church conference by secret ballot. The Deacons shall serve on a staggered basis. Each year the term of office of one third of the number of deacons shall expire, and election shall be held to fill the vacancies. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the members of the Church may elect a new deacon to fill the unexpired term. In addition to the scriptural qualifications, the Church requires that prior to the time of nomination, a man must be 21 years of age or older and have been a member of the Church for one year. There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to the Church from another church where he has served as a deacon.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, the Deacons are to be servants of the Church. The task of the Deacon is to serve with the Pastor in performing pastoral ministry tasks; proclaiming the gospel to believers and unbelievers; caring for the church members and other persons in the community; leading the Church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry and application; and leading the Church in performing its tasks.

### **Section 4. Moderator**

The Moderator shall be elected annually at a church conference, and shall serve as the chair and shall preside at all conferences and other meetings of the Church during the Moderator's term of service. A lay person or the Pastor may be elected to serve in this capacity. The Moderator shall be familiar with the Church's Constitution and Bylaws, policies, and the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, and be prepared and informed regarding agenda items prior to the church conference. In the absence of the Moderator at any conference or other meeting, the Chairman of Deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the Clerk shall call the church conference to order and an acting moderator shall be elected by majority vote of the members present.

### **Section 5. Clerk**

The Church Clerk shall be elected annually and shall record minutes of all actions and procedures of the church taken in church conference and shall maintain the church's corporate records. The Church Clerk shall sign and validate legal documents with reference to church action as required. The Church Clerk, with the approval of the Church, may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should normally be filed in the church office.

### **Section 6. Treasurer**

The Church shall elect annually the Treasurer. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to sign checks for disbursed funds on behalf of the Church. The Treasurer shall serve as a member of the Financial Stewardship Ministry Team.

### **Section 7. Church Council**

The Church Council shall serve the Church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the Church and its organizations.

The primary functions of the Church Council shall be to recommend to the Church suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and ministry teams; to recommend to the Church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources, according to program priorities; and to evaluate achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.

Regular members of the Church Council shall be the Pastor, other ministerial staff members, directors or an appointed representative of church program organizations, Chairman of the Deacons, church officers, and chairpersons of ministry teams or designated ministry team members. Any church council member may be appointed to serve as chairman.

All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the members of the Church for approval.

### **Section 8. Trustees**

Three Trustees, elected by the members of the Church, will make recommendations to the members of the Church regarding the purchase, sale, mortgage, lease, or transfer of any property of the Church. It shall be the function of these Trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging, purchase or rental of property, or other legal documents where the signatures of the Trustees are required. (In case of disability, a minimum of two shall sign.) The term of office for Trustees shall be nine years on a staggered basis, with one new Trustee being elected every three years. They may succeed themselves.

The Trustees shall serve as the members of the Board of Directors of the Church. Each Trustee shall be deemed elected annually as a Director for successive annual terms coinciding with the Trustee's term of office as a Trustee. Upon resignation, death or removal of a Trustee, the Trustee shall cease to serve as a Director. All vacancies in the office of Trustee and Director shall be filled by the members at a regular or special church conference.

## **III. Church Non-Ministerial Staff**

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the Church determines the need for their services. Job descriptions and compensatory rules for each position will be written by the Personnel Ministry Team and approved by the church body at a special or regular church conference prior to employment. The Personnel Ministry Team shall interview applicants for such positions and take into consideration the recommendation of the supervising staff member.

## **IV. Church Leadership Qualifications**

All ministry leaders must be members of the Church, growing as disciples and committed to the Church's philosophy of ministry. In addition to possessing the skills for a ministry task, members are expected to have a sense of God's call to that specific area of service. All Sunday school teachers, administrative ministry team members, and ministry team chairpersons shall be members in good standing of the Church.

## **V. Church Ministry Teams**

### **Section 1. General**

(A) Church ministry teams are designed to help the Church achieve its purpose and goals. A church ministry team is not an autocratic/self-determining group, but a servant of the Church which established it and receives its reports. Unless specifically given power to act, a ministry team does not take final action, committing the Church, until authorized by the members of the Church in a church conference.

(B) All church ministry team members shall be nominated by the Committee on Ministry Teams and elected annually by the members of the Church unless otherwise indicated in the descriptions below.

(C) An individual may serve as the chairman of only one ministry team. An individual may not serve as chairman of a ministry team: (1) while serving as chairman of the deacons, and/or (2) while an elected head of any church organization.

(D) Full-time church ministerial staff may not serve on any ministry team except in an ex-officio, non-voting, or advisory capacity. Church ministerial staff members may not serve on the Personnel Ministry Team since they are under the jurisdiction of the Personnel Ministry Team. However, the Pastor, without qualification, shall serve as a voting member of the Personnel Ministry Team.

(E) The Church may, at the recommendation of the Committee on Ministry Teams, establish special ministry teams necessary to fulfill special projects, ministry focus, or the needs of the local ministry.

(F) A quorum consisting of a majority of ministry team members must be present in order to hold its meeting.

(G) Ministry teams are divided into three categories: administrative ministry teams, deacon ministry teams, and service ministry teams as deemed necessary.

(H) Church membership is required for service on an administrative ministry team and also is required of the chairperson of any ministry team. Further, an individual need not be a member of the Church to serve on a service ministry team but must be enrolled in Sunday school.

(I) Administrative and service ministry teams, except for those with one person, shall have a staff liaison and a Committee on Ministry Teams' contact person.

(J) The scope and duties of administrative and service ministry teams are contained in the organizational manual for administrative, deacon, and service ministry teams. The Committee on Ministry Teams shall be responsible for annually reviewing and maintaining the organizational manual.

(K) The Committee on Ministry Teams shall have the general oversight of all ministry teams except the deacon ministry teams. Otherwise, the Committee on Ministry Teams shall have the authority to add, amend, or delete ministry teams as appropriate.

(L) Any revisions to the Constitution, the Articles of Incorporation of the Church or these Bylaws shall be referred to the Constitution and Bylaws Ministry Team for review and presentation to the members of the Church as required. The Constitution and Bylaws Ministry Team shall be responsible for overseeing the incorporation of revisions approved by the Church into the Constitution, the Articles of Incorporation of the Church, and these Bylaws.

## **Section 2. Administrative Ministry Teams**

The scope and duties of administrative ministry teams are included in the organizational manual compiled by the Committee on Ministry Teams. Administrative ministry teams shall include, but not be limited to, the following: Financial Processes and Procedures, Baptist Council, Children's Council, Committee on Ministry Teams, Constitution and Bylaws, Emergency Response, Evangelism, Executive, Financial Stewardship, Strategic Planning, Men, Messengers, Missions, Music Leadership, Nominating, Personnel, Prayer, Properties, Scholarship, Senior Adult, Shepherding and Student Leadership, Weekday Preschool, Women, and Young Adults.

## **Section 3. Deacon Ministry Teams**

The Deacons shall organize appropriate ministry teams to fulfill the ministry of the Church. The responsibility to staff, add, amend, or delete deacon ministry teams rests with the Chairman of the Deacons and deacon officers. The standing deacon ministry teams are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The scope and duties of these deacon ministry teams are included in the organizational manual compiled by the Committee on Ministry Teams.

## **Section 4. Service Ministry Teams**

Service ministry teams include ministry areas such as audio-visual, benevolence, bereavement, flower, greeters, history, hospitality, media, parking, public relations, transportation and ushers. Additional service ministry teams may be deemed necessary from time to time according to the ministry needs and outreach of the Church. The scope and duties of service ministry teams are included in the organizational manual compiled by the Committee on Ministry Teams.

# **VI. Program Organizations**

## **Section 1. General**

The Church shall provide program organizations to reach all age groups. These organizations shall be under church control. All program leaders shall report regularly to the Church. It is understood that the Pastor is an ex-officio, non-voting, officer of all the organizations named herein, and his leadership is to be recognized in them. The ministry focus for these program organizations are as follows:

## **Section 2. Sunday School**

There shall be a Sunday School under the administration of the Minister of Education and Outreach. Such organization shall be divided into divisions, departments, and classes for all ages and conducted under the leadership of Sunday School directors for the study of God's Word. Sunday School is to be conducted each Sunday morning. The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the Biblical revelation; lead in reaching all prospects for the

Church; lead all members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and the denomination.

### **Section 3. Discipleship**

The Discipleship program shall serve as the training organization of the Church. This program shall be under the administration of the Minister of Education and Outreach. The tasks of the Discipleship program shall be to teach systematic theology, Christian history, Christian ethics, and church polity and organization; give orientation to new church members, train all church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily; train leaders for the Church and the denomination; discover, recruit, and train potential leaders; provide for specialized training; provide organization and leadership for special projects of the Church; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and the denomination.

### **Section 4. Music & Worship Ministry**

There shall be a ministry of Music & Worship, under the administration of the Minister of Music & Worship. Such organizational structures shall be included as needed. The main purpose of the Music & Worship Ministry shall be to provide opportunities for believers to meet God in worship, opening their hearts to God's love, opening their minds to God's truth, and opening their spirits to God's control. The focus of the Music Ministry shall be to teach and encourage a lifestyle of worship through the medium of music. The Music & Worship Ministry shall also provide opportunities for persons to serve God through singing, playing instruments, leading choirs, participating in drama, and presenting special seasonal and non-seasonal programs/productions.

### **Section 5. Preschool Ministry and Children's Ministry**

The Preschool Ministry and Children's Ministry shall serve to attract, reach, and disciple children from birth through sixth grade and their families for Christ through Biblical instruction, programs, recreation, and activities. These ministries shall support and assist parents in fulfilling their God-given responsibility of child rearing. The Preschool and Children's Ministries shall provide such programs as needed to provide for the care and education of the children in accordance with the Church's principles and mission. The Preschool and Children's Ministries shall be under the administration of the Preschool Minister and the Children's Minister respectively.

### **Section 6. Youth Ministry**

The Youth Ministry shall have the task of instructing young people from seventh grade through high school ages in Christian ethics, Christian living, Christian morals, and Christian recreation. The ministry shall schedule programs, recreation, and activities in accordance with the Church's principles and mission. The Youth Ministry shall be under the administration of the Youth Minister and shall have such officers, teen council, and other organizations as required.

### **Section 7. Young Adults**

The Church shall provide an outreach to college, career and single young adults. This organization shall seek to lead young adults to know God through His Word, to actively minister for God by serving others; to seek God's wisdom and direction through prayer; and to build up the body of Christ by loving one another. Spiritual, physical, and social needs of young adults in the Church shall be met through Bible study, prayer, activities, and special events. The college, career and single young adult ministry shall be under the administration of the Minister of Education and Outreach.

### **Section 8. Baptist Men**

The Baptist Men shall be the Church's organization for mission education, mission action, and mission support for men, young men, and boys. Its task shall be to teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through prayer and financial support, and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination. Baptist Men shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

### **Section 9. Women on Mission**

The Women on Mission organization shall be the mission education, mission action, and mission support organization of the Church for women, young women, girls, and preschool children. Its tasks shall be to teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through prayer and financial support, and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the Church and denomination. Women on Mission shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

## **VII. Church Meetings**

### **Section 1. Worship Services**

The Church shall meet regularly for the purpose of Worship. Worship shall include opportunities to grow in our vertical relationship with God, and to enhance our relationships with fellow believers. Worship is the natural response of the believer to all that God is and all that He has done for us. Worship will also have a focus on those who have not yet begun a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, as we lift Him up, and He does the work of drawing them to Himself. Worship will be a priority for the Church. Worship shall be planned and directed under the leadership of the Pastor and the Minister of Music & Worship.

### **Section 2. Church Ordinances**

This Church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. Baptism shall be by immersion in water. The Pastor, or whomever the Church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The Deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and the observance of, baptism. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church.

The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month, unless otherwise scheduled by the Church. The Pastor and Deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper. The Deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations.

### **Section 3. Church Conference**

Meetings in the form of regular church conferences shall be held quarterly on a designated Sunday evening or Wednesday evening. The first conference held each calendar year shall constitute the Church's annual meeting of members.

The Church shall notify members of the date, time and place of each quarterly conference no less than ten (10) days before the meeting date. Notice given at a regular worship service through the church bulletin shall constitute notice for all purposes under these Bylaws, except for special church conferences, and written notice mailed to all members shall constitute notice for that purpose. Should there be any non-routine business or matters of special interest to be brought before a quarterly conference, or a matter as to which applicable law requires such notice, no less than twenty-five (25) days notice shall be given to the members prior to the conference.

### **Section 4. Special Church Conferences**

Meetings constituting a special church conference may be held to consider special matters of a significant nature. A special church conference may be called by (and only by) the Pastor, the Trustees or a majority of the Deacons. No less than ten (10) days' notice must be given for a special church conference; however, should there be any non-routine business or matters of special interest to be brought before a special church conference, or a matter as to which applicable law requires such notice, no less than twenty-five (25) days' notice shall be given to the members prior to the conference. This notice must state the nature of the business to be considered.

### **Section 5. Quorum**

The minimum number of members that must be present at any meeting for the proper conduct of business must be 75 members, provided it is a regular church conference or a special conference that has been properly called.

### **Section 6. Parliamentary Rules**

The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all conferences of the Church, where applicable and where they are not in conflict with these Bylaws or any special rules of order the Church may adopt.

### **Section 7. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1 through December 31. Ministry team members are appointed and approved by church conference action in the fall and serve on a fiscal year basis. The organizational year of the Church shall be from September 1 through August 31.

## **VIII. Church Finances**

### **Section 1. Budget**

The Financial Stewardship Ministry Team shall prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and worldwide expenses. The proposed budget will be presented at a regular or special called church conference. All budget discussion and amendments shall take place during this church conference. The budget will be presented to the Church for adoption by voice vote at the conclusion of the following Sunday morning worship service without discussion. If unable to declare an outcome on this basis, the chair may call for a show of hands.

Unbudgeted items in excess of \$25,000 shall be brought to the members at the church conference for approval.

It is understood that membership in this Church involves a financial obligation to support the Church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Each new member shall be furnished envelopes for participation in giving to the Church's unified budget by a representative of the Church.

### **Section 2. Accounting Procedures**

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the Office Administrator and be properly recorded on the books of the Church. There shall be at least two church members available for counting weekly receipts. Deposits are made by representatives from the Deacons. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Financial Stewardship Ministry Team.

The Church's financial records shall be reviewed annually by the Financial Processes and Procedures Ministry Team. A report on the annual financial review shall be presented at the church conference immediately following said review.

## **IX. Property Holding**

### **Section 1.**

The property of this Church shall be vested in the hands of the three Trustees under such arrangements as shall most effectively secure a legal tenure.

### **Section 2.**

If at any time a majority of the Church shall dissolve the Church, the property of the Church shall be disposed of as provided in a resolution adopted by the members of the Church, subject to the requirements of the Articles of Incorporation.

## **X. Amendments**

Changes in the Constitution and Bylaws may be presented and discussed at a special or regular church conference. Any proposed change shall be referred to the Constitution and Bylaws Ministry Team. This team shall present the proposed change at the next church conference. Amendments to the Constitution or the Articles of Incorporation of the Church shall be adopted by three-fourths vote of the members present. Amendments to the Bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

## **XI. Records**

A current copy of the Constitution, the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws shall at all times be maintained by the Church Clerk among the Clerk's records. A separate copy shall be maintained in the church office. All amendments or revisions shall, after passage by the Church, be incorporated by the Clerk in the official copy of the Constitution, the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws and shall be made available to the church members upon request. It shall be the responsibility of the Constitution and Bylaws Ministry Team to ensure that

approved amendments and revisions are made in the official copy of the Constitution, the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws prior to the next regular church conference.