

BYLAWS OF FBCTC

ARTICLE I – NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1. Name: The name of this organization shall be First Baptist Church of Tahoe City (a Member of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship) (“FBCTC”).

Section 2. Purpose: The purpose of FBCTC is to support the spiritual, charitable, and community-building mission adopted by its members and to provide governance, oversight, and stewardship of its ministries, personnel, and resources as more particularly described in Sections 3 and 4 below. Included in this purpose is the provision of food, clothing, fuel, and shelter to members of our local Tahoe community who are in need.

Section 3. Mission Statement: First Baptist Church of Tahoe City seeks to:

- Love God and Share the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Love and Serve the Lake Tahoe Community.
- Live the Gospel of Jesus Christ by showing:
 - Jesus at the Center.
 - Love in Action.

Section 4. Core Values:

Soul Freedom — We believe in the priesthood of all believers and affirm the freedom and responsibility of every person to relate directly to God without the imposition of creed or the control of clergy or government.

Bible Freedom — We believe in the authority of Scripture. We believe the Bible, under the Lordship of Christ, is central to the life of the individual and the Church. We affirm the freedom and right of every Christian to interpret and apply scripture under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Church Freedom — We believe in the autonomy of every local church. We believe Baptist churches are free, under the Lordship of Christ, to determine their membership and leadership, to order their worship and work, to ordain whomever they perceive as gifted for ministry, and to participate as they deem appropriate in the larger body of Christ.

Religious Freedom — We believe in the freedom of religion, freedom for religion, and freedom from religion. We support the separation of church and state.

ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership

At FBCTC, we believe church membership is about belonging to a community of believers, not simply being listed on a roll. If you consider FBCTC your church home and part of your church family, we consider you a member.

We recognize that people engage with church life in different ways and at different stages of faith. Rather than creating unnecessary barriers, we welcome those who desire to follow Jesus and participate in the worship, fellowship, mission, and ministry of our church.

FBCTC may maintain membership records and guidelines as needed for governance, legal, or ministry purposes, consistent with our Baptist heritage, faith in Jesus Christ, and commitment to being a welcoming church community.

Section 2. Rights of Members

Members in good standing shall have the right to:

- Attend membership meetings.
- Vote on matters brought before the membership. Members may begin voting after one year of regular membership.
- Serve in elected or appointed leadership roles, if eligible.

Section 3. Meetings of the Membership

- An annual meeting shall be held each year for elections, reports, and major business. Quarterly “business meetings” shall further be held wherein the Pastor and Staff shall update the members of FBCTC.
- Special meetings may be called by the Council Chair or a majority of the Church Council with reasonable notice.
- Regarding voting, no member shall be allowed to “pack” or bring non-members to vote on any matter. If it appears that there is any inappropriate voting, then to the extent of such, the vote is void or voidable by the Council.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Membership in FBCTC may be terminated by: (a) death; (b) transfer of membership to another congregation upon written request; (c) written request for removal by the member; (d) (i) acts of violence to the community, members or guests of FBCTC, or (ii) threatened acts of violence; (e) action of the Church Council, following consultation with the SPRC, in cases of persistent conduct seriously harmful to the witness and unity of the church. In the event of Council action

under (d or e), the member shall be notified in writing and afforded an opportunity to respond before final action is taken.

Section 5. Quorum

A quorum at a membership meeting shall consist of those members present, provided notice has been properly given.

ARTICLE III – CHURCH COUNCIL & MINISTRY LEADERS

Section 1. Authority of the Church Council: The Church Council shall be the primary governing body of the Organization and shall act on behalf of the membership between membership meetings. Church Council Members are but another name for the use of Elders in Scripture.

Section 2. Composition

- The Council shall consist of between five and seven voting members, including the Council Chair. The Council Chair shall only have a vote in the event of a tie vote. No proxies shall be allowed regarding voting matters as it is important that all Council members who are deciding a matter be present for the discussion of what may be at issue. A Council member who is out of town may appear by Zoom or telephone.
- The Pastor (or lead staff member) shall serve as an **ex officio, non-voting member**.
- A quorum shall consist of 50% of the Council plus one additional member or in this example of a council of seven, four members of the Council including the chair.
- New members of the Council shall be determined by the existing Council after appropriate internal discussion and, if necessary, a vote thereon.

Section 3. Duties of the Church Council

The Council shall:

- Provide overall leadership, vision, and governance
- Ensure alignment with the FBCTC mission
- Approve budgets and oversee financial stewardship
- Establish policies and procedures for the Church and its governance.
- Receive reports from committees, including the SPRC.
- Support and evaluate the effectiveness of ministries (not individual staff)
- Approve hiring personnel or termination or discipline thereof, in consultation with the SPRC, and approve salaries.
- Provide oversight of all church programs, to ensure alignment with the mission of FBCTC and compliance with applicable regulatory requirements.

- Each Council Member shall be individually responsible to perform the duties required of him/her, as discussed in the interview with Council.

Section 4. Term of Office of Council Members: Council members shall serve staggered three-year terms and may be re-elected. To establish the stagger upon adoption of these bylaws, initial members shall be appointed to terms of one, two, or three years respectively, so that approximately one-third of the Council rotates each year. Thereafter, all regular terms shall be three years. The Council encourages bringing new members on as positions rotate to foster continuing growth of leadership. Those Council members who have served three years as of the date of adoption of these bylaws shall serve an additional year and shall rotate off the Council at the end of 2027, with subsequent rotations occurring annually thereafter.

Section 4a. Qualifications for Council Membership: Council members shall: (a) be members of FBCTC in good standing; (b) demonstrate commitment to the mission and core values of FBCTC; (b) profess the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their personal, family and business lives; (c) exhibit spiritual maturity and sound judgment; (d) have sufficient time available to fulfill Council responsibilities; (e) approach governance with a collaborative spirit and respect for fellow members and staff; and (f) have been a FBCTC member for at least two years.

Section 4b. Conflict of Interest and Termination of Council Membership:

Council members shall:

- Disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest in any matter before the Council and shall abstain from voting on any matter in which they have a direct financial interest or other personal conflict.
- Voluntarily terminate Council Membership if he/she is unable to complete the obligations of the Council Member.

Section 5. Meetings: The Council shall meet at least 11 times per year on the fourth Sunday of each month (typically after church at or around 10:45 a.m.) or at specially called meetings by the Chair with reasonable notice of at least five calendar days, unless the matter is of an emergent nature. Special or Emergency sessions may be held remotely on Zoom or other platform whereas regular meetings shall be in person at the Church. Ordinarily the Council does not meet in December.

Section 6. Authority of Ministry Leaders: Scripture designates this office with the Greek term “diakonos” (deacon), meaning “servant” or “one who ministers.” Our congregation has chosen to use the title “Ministry Leader” rather than “Deacon” in order to communicate the function of the office more plainly to those unfamiliar with ecclesiastical vocabulary. This is a matter of terminology, not substance — the office of Ministry Leader carries the full biblical weight, qualifications, and responsibilities historically attached to the diaconate.

Section 7. Duties of Ministry Leaders:

Ministry Leaders shall:

- Be Ministers of Mercy. They should identify and meet the physical, material, and practical needs of the congregation, particularly the poor, widows, the sick, and those in crisis (Acts 6:1; cf. Acts 4:34–35; 1 Timothy 5:9–10).
- Coordinate benevolence funds and other forms of material assistance with wisdom and discretion.
- Be Administrators of Resources, which would include:
 - Faithful stewardship of church finances, property, and physical resources on behalf of the congregation (1 Timothy 3:8).
 - Practical oversight of church operations that support, rather than substitute for, the elders' ministry of the Word and prayer.
- Free Elders for Word and Prayer. The office exists precisely so that elders/pastors are not diverted from teaching and shepherding by administrative and material burdens (Acts 6:2, 4).
- Model Servanthood. Because the office is rooted in the language of “diakonia” (service), Ministry Leaders are called to embody Christlike humility in their work — visibly, not merely functionally (Mark 10:43–45).
- Care Under the Authority of the Elders. Ministry Leaders serve under the spiritual oversight of Council, not as an independent governing body. Historically (and in most Reformed polities), the diaconate is a serving office subordinate to the ruling/teaching office of the eldership, though functioning with real delegated authority in its own sphere.

Section 8. Term of Office of Ministry Leaders: Ministry Leaders shall serve staggered three-year terms and may be re-elected. To establish the stagger upon adoption of these bylaws, initial members shall be appointed to terms of one, two, or three years respectively, so that approximately one-third of the Ministry Leadership rotates each year. Thereafter, all regular terms shall be three years. The Council encourages bringing new members on as positions rotate to foster continuing growth of leadership. Those Ministry Leaders who have served three years as of the date of adoption of these bylaws shall serve an additional year and shall rotate off Ministry Leadership at the end of 2027, with subsequent rotations occurring annually thereafter.

Section 9. Qualifications of Ministry Leaders:

Ministry Leaders shall exhibit:

- Doctrinal soundness and clarity on the Gospel.
- Character, as tested over time in the life of the congregation (1 Timothy 3:10).
- Household and marital fidelity, where applicable.

- Freedom from disqualifying patterns (greed, dishonesty, intemperance, double mindedness)

Section 10. Meetings: Ministry Leaders shall meet at specially called meetings by the Chair with reasonable notice of at least five calendar days, unless the matter is of an emergent nature. Special or Emergency sessions may be held remotely on Zoom or other platform whereas regular meetings shall be in person at the Church.

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

Section 1. Council Chair

The Council Chair shall:

- Preside at Council meetings; (The Pastor shall preside over membership “business meetings”).
- Work collaboratively with the Pastor.
- Ensure effective governance and orderly meetings
- The Chair shall serve a term of one year, selected by the Council at its first meeting following the annual membership meeting. The Chair may be re-elected to serve additional one-year terms. In the event of the Chair’s resignation or inability to serve, the Council shall elect an acting Chair to complete the remainder of the term.
- Call Special or Emergency Meetings as may be necessary to address urgent or emergent situations, and set the agenda of meetings in consultation with the Pastor and Council members.

Section 2. Ministry Leaders Chair

- Preside at Ministry Leadership meetings.
- Work collaboratively with the Pastor and Church Council.
- Ensure effective governance and orderly meetings.
- The Chair shall serve a term of one year, selected by the Ministry Leadership at its first meeting following the annual membership meeting. The Chair may be re-elected to serve additional one-year terms. In the event of the Chair’s resignation or inability to serve, the Ministry Leadership shall elect an acting Chair to complete the remainder of the term.
- Call Special or Emergency Meetings as may be necessary to address urgent or emergent situations and set the agenda of meetings in consultation with the Pastor, and Council members.

Section 3. Other Officers and Council Member Ministry/Responsibility: The Council shall elect or appoint other officers (e.g. Vice Chair or Chair Elect, Secretary), and define their duties by policy. Upon their joining Council, a specific area of ministry/responsibility for the duration of their term shall be discussed and agreed upon. The following are areas of Council Member Ministry: (1) Food Ministry for Church Membership and Community; (2) Visiting and Hospital Ministry in coordination with the Ministry Leaders; (3) Stewardship Ministry; (4) Building and Grounds; (5) Coordination with the SPRC regarding Staff and Church Membership Support.

Section 4. Personnel Matters. The Council Member designated as responsible for coordination with SPRC regarding Staff and Church Membership Support shall maintain appropriate confidentiality and privacy of his/her communication with those under his/her care. If personnel decisions need to be made (such as hiring, termination, salary, hours, discipline), then he/she shall make recommendations to the Council, who should provide significant deference to such decisions, with the ability to make a final independent decision resting with the Council.

ARTICLE V - STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE (SPRC)

Section 1. Purpose

The SPRC shall provide a confidential and supportive forum for staff relationships, compensation, and working conditions, including all A+ employees.

Section 2. Composition

- The SPRC shall consist of 3 members appointed by the Church Council for staggered three-year terms. Each member may serve one consecutive term; reappointment is permitted after an absence of at least one year. In establishing the initial stagger, the Council shall appoint one member to each of a one-, two-, and three-year initial term.
- Members of the SPRC shall should not be immediate family of staff.
- The Pastor/staff leader may attend meetings except when the committee is discussing matters related to evaluation or compensation.

Section 3. Duties of the SPRC (Addendum for Detailed Description of SPRC Attached)

The SPRC shall:

- Foster healthy communication between staff and the congregation.
- Recommend compensation and benefits to the Council.
- Support staff well-being and effectiveness.
- Address concerns related to staff roles or relationships.
- Maintain confidentiality in all personnel matters.

Section 4. Relationship to the Council

The SPRC shall report recommendations to the Church Council but shall not disclose confidential details unless required.

ARTICLE VI – FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall be from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026, and each similar successive year thereafter.

Section 2. Budget

An annual budget shall be prepared by the Church Administrator and approved by the Church Council with the process beginning in October of each year.

Section 3. Financial Oversight

Appropriate internal controls shall be maintained, and financial reports shall be presented regularly to the Council and annually to the membership. Specifically: (a) the Council shall designate a Treasurer or Church Administrator responsible for day-to-day financial management; (b) checks or disbursements above an amount set by Council policy shall require two authorized signatures; (c) an independent financial review or audit shall be conducted at a minimum every three years; (d) the Treasurer or Administrator shall provide monthly financial reports to the Council and quarterly summaries to the membership; and (e) the Council shall adopt a policy governing the receipt and use of restricted gifts to ensure donor intent is honored.

ARTICLE VII – COMMITTEES AND MINISTRIES

The Staff-Parish Relationship Committee (“SPRC”) shall be a permanent committee and shall have the duties set forth in Attachment “A”.

The Council may establish standing or ad hoc committees as needed and define their responsibilities.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present at a duly called membership meeting, provided the full text of the proposed amendment has been distributed to the membership at least two weeks in advance of the meeting at which the vote will be taken.

ARTICLE IX – PASTOR

Section 1. Calling and Termination of the Pastor

When a pastoral vacancy exists, the Church Council shall constitute a Pastor Search Committee of three to five members drawn from the active membership. The Search Committee shall present one candidate at a time to the congregation. The Pastor shall be called by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present at a membership meeting duly called for that purpose, with at least two weeks' written notice provided to the membership in advance. The Pastor shall be engaged under a written letter of agreement or employment agreement specifying compensation, responsibilities, and terms. Either party may terminate the relationship by providing sixty (60) days' written notice to the other. The Church, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present at a duly called meeting, may terminate the relationship on ninety (90) days' notice or immediately, by providing ninety (90) days' equivalent salary in lieu of notice.

Section 2. Emergency Succession

If the Pastor is temporarily or permanently unable to fulfill pastoral duties, the Council Chair shall coordinate with the SPRC to arrange appropriate interim pastoral coverage and shall notify the congregation as circumstances allow. If the Council Chair is also unable to serve, the remaining members of the Church Council shall elect an acting Chair from among themselves to serve until the Chair is able to resume duties or a new Chair is selected at the next regular Council meeting.

Section 3. Duties

Role and Purpose of the Pastor

The Pastor shall serve as the primary spiritual leader of FBCTC. In keeping with the size, mission, and resources of the congregation, the Pastor's most important responsibilities shall be preaching, spiritual leadership, and pastoral presence, rather than administrative management; however, it is acknowledged that the Pastor will, of necessity, be involved in administrative/business roles on a regular basis. The Pastor works collaboratively with the Church Council and under the personnel support and evaluation of the SPRC.

Primary Responsibilities

1. Preaching and Worship Leadership

- Prepare and deliver sermons for regular worship services.
- Provide theological and spiritual guidance in worship planning.
- Lead or oversee worship services, including special services when appropriate (e.g., holidays, memorials, seasonal services).

2. Spiritual Leadership

- Offer vision, teaching, and encouragement consistent with the mission and values of FBCTC.
- Provide pastoral care appropriate to a small congregation, including prayer, presence, and spiritual counsel as reasonably available including visits at home, hospital, or appropriate off-site location as need arises.

- Model Christian faith, integrity, and leadership within the congregation and community.
3. **Pastoral Availability and Office Hours**
- Maintain regular and predictable availability to the congregation through scheduled office hours.
4. **Pastor as Immediate Supervisor of Staff:** The Pastor shall serve as the immediate Supervisor of all staff members including Administrative, A+ (preschool) or other A+ teachers or otherwise. The Pastor shall serve as co-supervisor regarding A+ teachers with the primary supervisor thereof being the A+ Director. The Pastor shall provide direction and guidance to the Staff and shall hold regular Staff Meetings at a minimum of twice per month. The Pastor shall, in conjunction with the SPRC, provide recommendations regarding salary, hours, discipline, or other Staff issues that may occur in the ordinary course of business. In emergent situations, the Pastor shall have the authority to require members or staff to leave the premises of the Church, if emergent circumstances warrant, and to suspend but not terminate any member or Staff with the ultimate recommendations or decision to be with SPRC and Council.
5. **A Broad Calling:** The specific enumeration of the Primary Responsibilities of the Pastor as set forth above shall not be limiting. As such, the Pastor shall have the broad responsibility to oversee the operation of the Church in accordance with his calling:
- He may participate in any type of Church daily operation by overseeing work performed by others or performing work himself.
 - The Church recognizes that spiritual leadership, pastoral care, and modeling faith, integrity and leadership does include “getting your hands dirty”.

ARTICLE X – DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of First Baptist Church of Tahoe City, all assets remaining after payment of debts and liabilities, shall be distributed to one or more organizations affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or to other 501(c)(3) charitable or religious organizations, as determined by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present at a duly called membership meeting convened for that purpose. No assets shall be distributed to any private individual. This provision shall be interpreted consistent with the requirements of applicable federal and California state law governing nonprofit religious organizations.

ATTACHMENT “A”

The **Staff–Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)** serves as the congregation’s primary body for supporting healthy relationships between staff and the congregation, providing confidential guidance regarding personnel matters, and recommending appropriate actions to the Church Council.

1. Communication, Support, and Relationships

- Foster healthy, two-way communication between staff and the congregation.
- Serve as a trusted, confidential liaison for concerns related to staff relationships or working conditions.

2. Staff Support and Well-Being

- Provide emotional, spiritual, and practical support to staff, helping ensure a healthy working environment.
- Encourage continuing education, spiritual renewal, and growth opportunities for staff.
- Monitor general staff morale and help address issues early and constructively.

3. Evaluation and Feedback

- Conduct annual evaluations of employees (if applicable) using tools adopted by the Council.
- Offer constructive feedback and help staff establish mutually agreed-upon goals.
- Meet without the employee present when discussing his/her evaluation or compensation.

4. Compensation and Employment Recommendations

- Review staff compensation annually and recommend salary and benefits adjustments to the Church Council.
- Assist the Council in creating or updating job descriptions, employment policies, and performance expectations.
- Work with the Council in matters related to hiring, contract changes, or staffing levels.

5. Conflict Resolution

- Receive concerns related to staff roles or relationships and help resolve issues fairly and confidentially.

- Serve as a mediation body when misunderstandings arise, ensuring all parties are heard respectfully.

6. Confidentiality

- Maintain strict confidentiality in all personnel matters. This means avoidance of gossip, rumors etc., and respecting the personal and privacy rights of Pastor and Staff.
- Ensure confidential information is shared only when required by internal policy, legal obligation, or Council action.

7. Reporting Relationship

- Provide recommendations to the Church Council regarding personnel matters, compensation, and policy needs.
- Refrain from sharing confidential personnel details with the Council unless essential and permissible. This is defined as an action such as discipline, termination, salary increase or reduction.

8. Composition and Conduct

- Operate as a prayerful, discerning, and unified body committed to the mission of the church.
- Ensure members are not immediate family of staff.
- Hold meetings at least quarterly or as needed, with additional sessions during evaluation cycles.