

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Current Bylaws Language</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Proposed Changes</u></p>
<p>ARTICLE III – GENERAL CHURCH OFFICERS</p> <p>Section 3 – Deacons</p> <p>A. Number and term of office:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The active deacon body of the church shall consist of sixty regular members, one-third of whom shall be elected annually to serve for three-year terms.</li><li>2. Persons chosen to fill regular terms on the active deacon body shall be elected by the church to assume office on October 1 of each year.</li><li>3. After serving a term of three years, no deacon shall be eligible for reelection until the lapse of one year. Any deacon, however, who is elected to fill less than two years of an unexpired term, shall be eligible for reelection without the lapse of one year.</li></ol> <p>B. Nomination of Deacons</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. All nominees for Deacon shall:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Be at least 25 years of age;</li><li>b. Have been a member of the First Baptist Church for at least two years;</li><li>c. Be regular in attendance and in support of the services of the church;</li><li>d. Be faithful in the practice of financial stewardship;</li></ol></li></ol>	<p>ARTICLE III – GENERAL CHURCH OFFICERS</p> <p>Section 3 – Deacons</p> <p>A. Number and term of office:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The active deacon body of the church shall consist of sixty regular members, one-third of whom shall be elected annually to serve for three-year terms.</li><li>2. Persons chosen to fill regular terms on the active deacon body shall be elected by the church to assume office on <b><i>September</i></b> 1 of each year.</li><li>3. After serving a term of three years, no deacon shall be eligible for reelection until the lapse of one year. Any deacon, however, who is elected to fill less than two years of an unexpired term, shall be eligible for reelection without the lapse of one year.</li></ol> <p>B. Nomination of Deacons</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. All nominees for Deacon shall:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. <b><i>Be at least 25 years of age by the last day of the Deacon Election;</i></b></li><li>b. <b><i>Have been a member of the First Baptist Church for at least two years by the last day of the Deacon Election;</i></b></li><li>c. <b><i>Have been regular in attendance and in support of the services of the church, and commit to continue doing so during a term of Deacon service;</i></b></li></ol></li></ol>

e. Meet the principles and conditions set forth in Acts 6:3-6 and I Timothy 3:8-13; and

f. Be of good report among church members.

2. Solicitation of prospective deacon nominees shall occur each year immediately prior to nomination by publishing the nomination process at least once in the weekly mail out bulletin of the church, and any other means which will publicize the process.

3. Certification of Deacon Nominees

a. Up to twenty names for nomination shall be submitted by church members on forms to the Deacon Election Committee by the publicized deadline. These forms will include a listing of the names of presently active deacons who are ineligible for consideration during this election cycle. Members may not nominate First Baptist ministerial staff members or their spouses, or

d. *Have been faithful in the practice of financial stewardship while a member of FBC, and commit to continue doing so during a term of Deacon service;*

e. *Meet the Biblical principles for men and women serving as deacons, as set forth in the New Testament and understood by the broad membership of the FBC;*

f. Be of good report among church members.

g. *Have served in some type of Christian ministry or service, some of which must be through the FBC, and commit to active ministry or service during a term of deacon service;*

h. *Be willing and able to faithfully attend monthly Deacon Meetings.*

i. *Above all, be willing to be a servant and spiritual leader, and be a unifier in the life of the congregation in keeping with the first deacons chosen as described in Acts, Chapter 6;*

2. Solicitation of prospective deacon nominees shall occur each year *during the month of April*, by publishing the nomination process at least once in the weekly mail out bulletin of the church, and any other means which will publicize the process.

3. *Certification of Deacon Nominees*

a. *During the month of April*, up to twenty names for nomination shall be submitted by church members on forms to the Deacon Election Committee by the publicized deadline *at the end of April (the Deacon Election Committee is comprised of each year's retiring members of the active deacon body, ineligible for reelection, as described in Bylaws Article IV.3.B)*. These forms

employees of the church, or ordained ministers active in their calling who may be members of the church.

- b. Commitment forms shall be sent by the Deacon Election Committee to all nominees who are 25 years or older, and have been members of First Baptist Church for at least 2 years. Said form shall include a provision for the nominee to certify whether or not they meet the requirements of **Section 3, B.1.a-f**, as well as whether or not they accept the nomination. Prospective nominees must complete and return the commitment form by the deadline set by that committee in order to be placed on the deacon election ballot.
- c. The Deacon Election Committee shall compile a list of names of those nominees who are at least 25 years of age, who have been a member of the church for at least two years and who return a commitment form.

will include a listing of the names of presently active deacons who are ineligible for consideration during this election cycle. Members may not nominate First Baptist ministerial staff members or their spouses, or employees of the church, or ordained ministers active in their calling who may be members of the church.

- b. *The Deacon Election Committee shall send a letter by mail, as well as email to every nominee, listing the requirements of Section 3, B.1.a-i and inviting them to attend any one of several scheduled Deacon Nominee Orientation meetings during the month of May, after nominations are completed. The letter will state that attendance at one meeting is required for any nominee's name to be placed on the Deacon Election Ballot.*
- c. *Each Deacon Nominee Orientation meeting shall be led by the current Deacon Chairperson or designate, as well as another Deacon Officer and one ministerial staff member. The meeting will review the church's requirements for deacon service, and allow time for questions and discussion. At the meeting conclusion, each nominee will be given a Response Form and asked to prayerfully consider their nomination, then return their completed Response Form personally to the church office if they wish their name to be placed on the Deacon Election Ballot. The Response Form will ask the nominee to confirm that they meet and will commit to continue meeting the church's requirements for deacon service, that they give the church financial secretary who processes members' annual contribution statements permission to confidentially confirm they are a financial supporter of the FBC, and that they give the*

- d. Names and other information for each of the proposed, qualified nominees shall be published in the church's weekly bulletin.

C. Election Procedures

1. A ballot containing the names of all prospective deacons who have been pre-qualified by the Deacon Election Committee according to the procedure in **Section 3, B.** above, shall be prepared for distribution and voting. Said ballot shall be available for absentee voting no later than the second Sunday in July. An absentee ballot may be marked and returned to the church and declared valid provided it bears the signature of the voting member.
2. On the first Sunday in August, the official ballot of

*church office permission to publish a current photo and brief ministry bio to the church membership for election purposes. The deadline for the church office to receive Response Forms shall be the last day of May.*

- d. *The Deacon Election Committee shall review all Response Forms received by the deadline for completeness and accuracy. If any questions arise regarding a nominee's information, the Deacon Chair or Deacon Officer designate shall lead in the resolution of the question through conversation with the nominee. Any unresolved questions shall be brought to the Deacon Election Committee for a final decision by majority vote.*
- e. *All Nominees who have attended a Deacon Orientation, completed and returned a Response Form by the deadline and whose statements have been confirmed will become Deacon Candidates, and their names will be placed on the Deacon Election Ballot during the first week of June. The church will publish all Deacon Candidate photos and bios in the church's June and July print and internet media so church members can recognize and know each Deacon Candidate by face, name and ministry.*

C. Election Procedures

1. A ballot containing the names of all *Deacon Candidates* who have been pre-qualified by the Deacon Election Committee according to the procedure in **Section 3, B.** above shall be prepared for distribution and voting. *Said ballot shall be available for voting no later than the second Sunday in June. Ballots will be declared valid provided they bear the signature of the voting member.*
2. *Ballots may be cast though the second Sunday in July,*

proposed deacon names shall be distributed to the church membership for voting during the morning services.

3. All ballots to be counted must be received by the Deacon Election Committee for tabulation by the end of the 11:00 AM service the first Sunday in August.
4. The Deacon Election Committee will tabulate the ballots and submit a list of names of the twenty individuals who received the most votes to the pastor and deacon chairperson.
5. The list of remaining nominees will be ranked by the Deacon Election Committee according to the number of votes received, and maintained by the Deacon Election Committee chairperson for one year. Nominees on this list who have received the highest number of votes in the annual deacon election will be selected to fill any vacancies which occur during the year.
6. The pastor will announce the list of newly elected deacons on the second Sunday in August.

D. Consistent with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament, deacons shall consider themselves as servants of the church and shall serve in administering the will of the church. The following duties shall be considered primary:

1. They shall be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace.
2. They shall serve as a council of advice and consultation with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the work of the church and shall cooperate with him in the general oversight of the moral, spiritual and temporal welfare of the church.
3. They shall cooperate with the pastor in the care of the membership, particularly the sick and distressed. They shall seek to know the physical, moral and spiritual needs

*by placing them in the ballot containers in the church foyers.*

3. All ballots to be counted must be *by the end of the last morning worship service on the second Sunday in July.*
4. The Deacon Election Committee will tabulate the ballots and submit a list of names of the twenty individuals who received the most votes to the pastor and deacon chairperson.
5. The list of remaining **Deacon Candidates** will be ranked by the Deacon Election Committee according to the number of votes received, and maintained by the Deacon Election Committee chairperson for one year. **Deacon Candidates** on this list who have received the highest number of votes in the annual deacon election will be selected to fill any vacancies which occur during the year.
6. The pastor will announce the list of newly elected deacons on the third Sunday in July.

D. Consistent with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament, deacons shall consider themselves as servants of the church and shall serve in administering the will of the church. The following duties shall be considered primary:

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3. They shall cooperate with the pastor in the care of the membership, particularly the sick and distressed. They shall seek to know the physical, moral and spiritual needs

of members and shall serve in ministering to those in need.

4. They shall administer the financial affairs of the church, subject to approval of their actions by the church. Structural changes, any borrowing of money or any changes affecting the salary of the pastor or other ministerial staff members shall be submitted to the church in conference, except as set forth in **Article IV, Section 3, A. 4.**
5. In counsel with the pastor and by such methods as the Holy Spirit may direct consistent with the teaching of the New Testament, the deacons shall have oversight of the discipline of the church.
6. In order to carry out the will of the church, they shall oversee and coordinate the commissions, committees, and other leadership groups. In the event of the failure of another leadership group or committee of the church to carry out an assigned responsibility, the deacons shall be responsible to insure that the will of the church is accomplished.
7. One or more members of the active deacon body shall serve on each church committee.

E. The active deacon body shall meet monthly at a time they shall determine and shall elect a chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary. The active deacon body shall adopt procedures, from time to time, that allow the newly elected deacons for the coming term, whether or not ordained, to vote in place of those deacons who will no longer be active in the term for which deacon officers are being chosen. The deacon officers shall also serve as the corporate officers of the corporate body of the church incorporated under the name and style, 'Board of Trustees of the First Baptist Church of Gainesville, Georgia, Inc.' These Bylaws shall also serve as the Bylaws of such corporation.

F. Life Deacons

1. Qualifications for Life Deacons

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F. Life Deacons

1. Qualifications for Life Deacons

- a. The life deacon nominee must have served in the capacity of deacon in a Baptist church for at least twenty-four years, twelve of which must have been served in the First Baptist Church of Gainesville.
- b. The life deacon nominee must have attained at least 65 years of age.
- c. The life deacon nominee must be one who, by virtue of his or her Christian character and integrity, is especially admired and deeply respected by the church membership, and who has proven by his or her dedication and loyal and unselfish service to the church, that he or she merit the highest honor the church can give one of its deacons.

2. Committee and Duty Assignments of Life Deacons

- a. Life deacons may attend any and all meetings of the deacon body, accept assignments to deacon committees, or serve the Lord's Supper, but they are not required to perform any of these functions.
- b. Life deacons may accept or decline any and all responsibilities and duties normally assigned to active deacons.
- c. Life deacons shall be non-voting; however, they shall have the privilege of participating in discussion and debate.

3. Nomination of Life Deacons

- a. The Deacon Election Committee shall solicit nominees who meet the stated qualifications for life deacon status.
- b. The nomination of life deacons by the Deacon Election Committee shall be made to the active

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- c. Nomination to life deacon status shall be with the concurrence of the proposed nominee.

4. Confirmation of Nomination of Life Deacons

- a. The active deacon body will confirm the nomination of life deacons by majority vote.
- b. The active deacon body will present its confirmation of the life deacons to the church for its endorsement of the individuals to this honored position.

5. Election to the Regular Deacon Body

- a. Confirmation of an individual as a life deacon shall not disqualify him/her from election and service on the regular, active deacon body.

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