

OAK GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Bylaws

Article 1: Church Membership

Section 1: Composition

This body shall be composed of persons who have confessed Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord, and have been baptized by immersion as a public profession of their faith and have been regularly received into the fellowship of this church.

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the leadership of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and physical 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

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday evening, or scheduled revival service. The candidate may be received by majority vote of members present in the following ways:

- (1) by profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church
- (2) by promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church
- (3) by the candidate's statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion as a public profession of their faith.

Section 3: New Member Orientation

New members of this church are expected to participate in the church's New Member Orientation. The orientation will be conducted by the pastor or a pastor appointed church member for this purpose.

Section 4: Rights of Membership

- (1) Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in business meetings, provided the member is present at the meeting.
- (2) Every active member of the church is eligible for consideration as candidates for elective offices in the church.
- (3) Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church (See Article VII, sections 1 and 2 of bylaws).

Section 5: Expectations and Responsibilities of Members

An active member is one who:

- (1) attends two of this church's regular services at least once a week (Sunday School, AM Worship, Discipleship Training, PM Worship, or Wednesday Prayer Meeting).
- (2) supports this church financially with their tithes and offerings
- (3) uses his/her talents and spiritual gifts in the Lord's work
- (4) engages in regular, personal devotional time.

All members are encouraged to be active members.

Section 6: Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) death of the member
- (2) transfer of letter to another Baptist church
- (3) exclusion by action of this church
- (4) upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination.

Section 7: 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 which 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 accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a majority vote of the members present at a regular or special business meeting is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of Christian love and perseverance.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

Section 8: Resident and Non-resident Membership

The resident membership of this church shall consist of all members who receive mail through the postal services of Trigg County and such others who are active members.

All other members shall be placed on a non-resident list and this list shall be maintained by the Church Clerk.

Article 2: Church Officers and Committees

All who serve as church officers and those who serve on church committees shall be members of this church.

Section 1: Church Officers

The officers of this church shall be the pastor, the ministerial staff, the deacons, a moderator, a clerk, a treasurer, and trustees.

(1) The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament Church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

The pastor is leader of the pastoral ministries in the church. As such he works with the deacons and church staff to: 1) lead the church in the achievement of its mission, 2) proclaim the Gospel and provide Bible based spiritual leadership, and 3) care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. A pastor selection committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's notice has been given. Election shall be by secret ballot or open vote, an affirmative vote of three fourths of those members present being necessary to extend a call.

He shall preside at meetings of this church, and if so designated may serve as moderator in all business meetings in keeping with the rules of order authorized in these bylaws. The pastor shall be responsible for enlisting supply preachers when he is planning to be absent.

The pastor, once called, shall serve until the relationship is terminated at his request or at the church's request. The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by giving at least two weeks notice to the church at the time of resignation.

The church may remove the pastor from his position at a meeting called for that purpose. A notice of at least one week must be given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the deacons or by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the resident 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 remove the pastor shall be by secret ballot; an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present being necessary to remove the pastor. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor removed 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 thirty days.

(2) The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Those staff members of whom the church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister shall be recommended to the church by the Selection Committee and called by church action. The church may vote to vacate such positions upon recommendation of the

Stewardship Committee, such termination being immediate and the compensation conditions being the same as for the pastor, except that the amount shall relate to the individual's compensation.

(3) Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The church Stewardship committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the Stewardship committee to the church body for approval.

(4) The deacons are to be servants of the church. Their task is to serve with the pastor and staff in performing the pastoral ministry tasks of 1) leading the church in the achievement of its mission, 2) proclaiming the Gospel and providing Bible based spiritual leadership, and caring for the church's members and other persons in the community.

In any period when the church is without a pastor, unless the church shall provide otherwise, the deacons will make arrangements for supply preachers. The deacons will make themselves available for counsel with the pastor selection committee, if requested by the committee or the church, with reference to securing a pastor.

The deacons shall serve as council with the pastor in matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare and work of the church. The deacons in council with the pastor, are to formulate plans for the constant effort and advancement of the church in its ministry of outreach to the lost, the development and maturity of Christians, and the growth of the Kingdom of God.

1) Deacon Selection Procedures

Following a vote by the church at any business meeting the deacon selection process may begin. The vote to select deacons must include the number of deacons which are to be elected. The selection process will follow these steps:

- a) A form will be prepared listing the Biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7) of a deacon and providing a space for a response. The response shall ask if the man would be willing to serve as deacon. This willingness includes the understanding that deacons are expected to be active members of Oak Grove Baptist Church (see Section 5: Expectations and Responsibilities of Members).
- b) The form will be distributed to all active, resident male members of Oak Grove Baptist Church 21 years of age or older, who has been a member of this church for at least two years. Each male shall indicate his willingness (or lack thereof) to serve as deacon, sign the form, and return it to the pastor.
- c) The form must be returned to the pastor within two weeks. If not returned the church will assume that the member is not willing to be considered as a deacon.
- d) After all eligible men have been contacted, the pastor and deacons shall offer a mandatory informational session for those willing to serve as deacons.

- e) After two weeks, those candidates expressing interest shall meet with the pastor and the deacons to be examined in regards to their doctrinal soundness and biblical qualifications.
- f) A special business meeting shall be called by the deacons for the sole purpose of choosing new deacons. At least two weeks notice must be given before this special meeting. At the time the business meeting is announced a listing of deacon candidates (those willing to serve as deacon if selected) shall be prepared and made available to members. This listing shall be used by the members for prayerful consideration in the election of the deacon(s).
- g) Deacon candidates shall be allowed to give a brief testimony prior to the vote of the church. This testimony is not to serve as an election speech, but as an expression of what Christ has done in his life.
- h) The election of a deacon(s) shall be by secret ballot by those in attendance at the special business meeting. The ballot will list the names of the men who indicated their willingness to serve as deacon in step two above.
 - (1) The ballot will indicate how many deacons are to be elected. For example, if four deacons are to be elected, each member can vote for four men on the list. The top vote getters will be selected as new deacons. Vote stacking is not allowed; each vote must be cast for a different man on the list. In the event of a tie vote, a tie breaking vote will be held at that meeting.
 - (2) In the event that the stated number of deacons to be elected is equal to or greater than the number of deacon candidates, each candidate shall be elected by secret ballot on a yes or no basis. Those receiving a simple majority of yes votes will be elected as new deacons.
- i) Votes shall be counted by the pastor, church clerk, and chairman of the deacons in private. In the event that one of these are unable to help count ballots, the moderator shall choose a substitute at the special business meeting.
- j) There shall be no obligation of this church to recognize or accept as an assigned deacon one who has been a deacon in another church. In such instances as one might be chosen by this church for assignment as a deacon, his previous ordination by another Southern Baptist church shall suffice for this church. After a minimum of 2 years church membership, with this church, the deacon selection procedure shall be used to elect this candidate as a deacon.

2) Inactive Deacons

- (a) A deacon may become inactive at their written request or by church action, as recommended by the deacon body. Notice of inactivation will be reported at a regular business meeting. A deacon may become active again through church action.

(b) Deacon Emeritus – any former deacon, having served for at least 12 years as a faithful, dedicated deacon, and who because of advanced age and/or ill health can no longer serve on the active deacon body, may be proclaimed by the church a Deacon Emeritus, and as such be privileged to attend any and all meetings of the deacon body in an advisory capacity only. The nomination shall be from the body of deacons to the church at any regular or called business meeting.

(5) The Moderator shall be elected annually by the church as its presiding officer. The pastor may serve as moderator unless otherwise provided by the church. In the absence of the moderator, the clerk shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator for that meeting.

(6) A Clerk shall be elected annually by the church as its clerical officer. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, their date of admission or termination, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of transfer as voted upon by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The clerk shall be responsible for preparing and submitting the annual church profile to the Little River Baptist Association.

(7) A Church Treasurer shall be elected annually by the church as its financial officer. An assistant treasurer shall also be elected annually. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to present to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by an auditing committee. The treasurer shall be bonded or insured, the church paying for the bond or insurance costs.

(8) Trustees. The church shall elect three trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action; they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. They shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters. Trustees shall serve a three year term on a rotating basis with one new trustee being elected each year.

Section 2: Church Committees

The standing committees of this church shall be as follows:

- Audit Committee
- Benevolence Committee
- Building and Grounds Committee
- Cemetery Committee

Children and Youth Committee
House Committee
Music Committee
Nominating Committee
Preschool Committee
Stewardship Committee
Transportation Committee

Additional standing and special committees may be added by the amendment procedure prescribed within these bylaws. All church committee members shall be recommended by the church nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these bylaws. The pastor shall serve as ex-officio member on all committees, except the pastor search committee. Any committee that is to function on an ongoing basis shall be added to the bylaws within one year from its inception.

All committee members shall serve for a multi-year period. The length of service, in years, on all regular committees is equal to the number of people serving on that committee. Excluded for counting purposes are those serving on the committee because they hold a specific church office. Committees with three members will have three year terms; four member committees will have four year terms. The terms of service will be staggered so that one person will rotate off the committee and one shall join the committee annually, unless otherwise specified in these bylaws. The outgoing member will become eligible for reappointment to the committee after being off the committee for one church year.

A member can choose to remove themselves from a committee before their term expires by notifying the nominating committee. The nominating committee shall nominate a person to fill the remaining portion of the member's term.

Church offices which are represented on committees, such as church treasurer on the stewardship committee, are not subject to member rotation. In this case the individual would serve on the committee as long as they hold the office.

The committee member in the final year of their term will be assumed to be the chairman of the committee. If that person chooses not to serve as chairman, the committee will select another one of its members to serve as chairman.

(1) Audit Committee

The Audit Committee shall audit the church financial records annually to guarantee accuracy of receipts and disbursement of funds as reported to the church. The committee shall consist of three active church members. To guarantee accountability and the integrity of the audit process the members of the committee cannot include the treasurer, the assistant treasurer, or anyone who handles the church receipts or their immediate family members.

(2) Benevolence Committee

The Benevolence Committee shall care for the needs of our church members during a loss in their lives with "a meal for the family" before or after the funeral.

This committee will not be a rotating committee and the number of members on this committee will be unlimited.

The responsibilities of this committee are as follows:

1. Contact the family to determine if a meal is requested.

2. Purchase the meat, bread, and beverages which will be paid for by the church.
3. Contact necessary church members to provide additional dishes.
4. Prepare the food, serve the meal, and clean the kitchen and eating area.

The church custodial staff will have the eating area set up for the meal (tables, chairs, table clothes, eating utensils, etc.). The benevolence committee chairman will be responsible for reporting to the custodial staff how many to prepare for.

(3) Building and Grounds Committee

The Building and Grounds Committee shall consist of five active church members. The committee shall be responsible for overseeing of the maintenance and upkeep of the church buildings and grounds. The committee shall oversee all construction and repairs to the buildings or grounds and secure the necessary materials and supplies and/or person or persons for that purpose. The parsonage and parsonage grounds are included as part of this committee's responsibilities.

(4) Cemetery Committee

The Cemetery Committee shall be composed and operated in the manner outlined in the Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery Constitution and Bylaws. The Cemetery Committee is responsible for oversight of the church cemetery (see appendix C).

(5) Children and Youth Committee

The Children and Youth Committee shall be composed of the lead teacher from each Sunday Class (kindergarten through 12th grade), the children/youth director, and a parent representative from the primary/intermediate, middle school, and high school. The children/youth director shall serve as the chair of this committee. The three parent representatives shall serve on a rotating basis as set forth in these bylaws.

The Responsibilities of this committee are as follows:

1. Set up a calendar of monthly planned activities and events for the year (other activities may be substituted for planned activities on the calendar).
2. Plan, promote, implement, and attend activities and events.
3. Everyone on the committee will not be able to attend every activity or event, so the committee is encouraged to enlist enough people to implement the activity or event (van drivers, workers, etc.).

(6) House Committee

The House Committee shall be composed of three active church members. It is not the job of the House Committee to hire or dismiss custodial staff. The committee shall periodically examine the housekeeping procedures of the church and the performance of those procedures. The committee shall counsel with the person or persons responsible for the janitorial work of the church and make helpful suggestions when necessary.

(7) Music Committee

The Music Committee shall consist of the music director, the organist, the pianist, and three other persons. The committee shall consult with the music director in the ministry and operations of the church music organization contained within these bylaws.

(8) Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Sunday School Director, the Discipleship Training Director, and four other persons. The committee members shall rotate at the April business meeting. The church shall fill the vacant position at that meeting. The four rotating members of the committee shall present to the church nominations for Sunday School Director and Discipleship Director, for the new church year, at the May business meeting. Once elected, the Sunday School Director and the Discipleship Training Director shall join the four rotating members in making nominations for the remaining positions.

The committee coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions filled by volunteer workers, unless otherwise specified in these bylaws. Persons considered for any such position shall first be approved by this committee before they are approached for recruitment. The committee shall present to the church for election all who accept the invitation to serve.

(9) Preschool Committee

The Preschool Committee shall be composed of three persons. The committee shall be responsible for securing the necessary supplies for the preschool department and the nursery of the church.

The committee shall also maintain a nursery schedule and secure persons to serve as nursery workers. The schedule will include workers for Sunday morning services, and revival services, and other times when the church may deem necessary.

(10) Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee members shall be the treasurer, the assistant treasurer, the pastor, and four other persons. The committee shall develop and recommend an overall stewardship plan and a unified church budget. The committee advises and recommends in the administration of gifts of church members and others, using sound principles of financial management. The committee works with the treasurer in the preparation and presentation to the church of required reports regarding the financial affairs of the church.

The committee shall serve as the Personnel Committee of the church. The committee shall be responsible for securing nonministerial staff as the church deems necessary. The committee shall assist the church in matters related to employed personnel administration, including those called by church action. The committee's administrative duties include such areas as determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, other compensation, policies, job descriptions, and personnel services. This committee shall make recommendations related to staff termination to the church at a regular business meeting when/if necessary.

(11) Transportation Committee

The Transportation Committee shall be composed of three members. The committee is responsible for coordinating the transportation needs of the church. The committee shall serve as a search committee when additional church vehicles are to be acquired, oversee the maintenance of church-owned vehicles, prepare vehicle usage policies for church approval, enlist and approve drivers of church vehicles, and arrange for additional transportation as needed.

Article 3: Church Program Organizations

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching; church member training, church leader training, new member orientation; mission education, action and support; and music education, training, and performance. All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control, and all program activities subject to church coordination and approval. All officers shall be elected by the church and report regularly to the church. The church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

(1) The Sunday School

The Sunday School shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching programs. Sunday School's task shall be to teach the Bible and its application to life, and its relevance for today; and reach persons for Christ and church membership.

The Sunday School shall be organized by departments and/or classes, as appropriate for all ages, and shall be conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director elected by the church.

(2) Discipleship Training

The Discipleship Training organization shall serve as the training unit of the church. Discipleship Training's tasks shall be to train church members to perform the functions of the church; train church leaders; orient new church members; teach Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history, and church polity and organization; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Discipleship Training shall be organized by departments for all ages and conducted under the direction of the Discipleship Training director.

(3) Women's Missionary Union (WMU)

The WMU shall be the mission organization of the church for women, young women, girls, and preschool children. WMU's tasks shall be to teach missions; engage in mission action; support world missions through praying and giving; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination. WMU shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires (WMU, BYW, Acteens, etc.).

(4) The Brotherhood

The Brotherhood shall be the church's mission organization for men, young men, and boys. Brotherhood's tasks shall be to teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through praying and giving, and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination. The Brotherhood shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

(5) The Church Music program

The Church Music program, under the direction of the music director, shall provide music for church worship services and other occasions. The church music program shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

Article 4: Church Program Services

The church shall maintain media center services and recreation services for the purpose of enriching and extending the ministries and programs of the church.

(1) The media center service will be the resource center for the church. The media center coordinator will seek to provide and promote the use of printed and audiovisual resources. The media center coordinator will provide consultation to church leaders and members in the use of printed and audiovisual resources.

(2) The church recreation service will seek to meet the recreational needs of church groups. The church recreation coordinator will provide recreation activities, consultation, leadership assistance, and resources.

Article 5: Church Council

The church council shall serve the church by leading in planning, coordination, conducting, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church and its organizations.

The primary functions of the church council shall be:

1. to recommend to the church suggested objectives and church goals
2. to review and coordinate ministry and program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees
3. to recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities
4. to evaluate achievements in terms of church objectives and goals.

Regular members of the church council shall be the pastor, music director, youth director, chairman of the deacons, Sunday School director, Disciple Training director, WMU director, and the Brotherhood director.

All matters agreed upon by the council which call for action not already approved shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

Article 6: Expectations of Church Teachers

Church teachers shall be expected to:

1. Prepare and teach the lesson.
2. Arrive early to welcome and greet students.
3. Make regular contacts with prospects and absentees.
4. Prepare an inviting atmosphere.
5. Work with organizational directors to obtain instructional supplies and needs.
6. Use church approved literature.
7. Communicate member needs to the pastor/deacons.

Article 7: Church Ordinances

Section 1: Baptism

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.

(1) Baptism shall be by immersion in water.

(2) The pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and the observance of baptism.

(3) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.

(4) A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff or deacons. If negative interest is determined on the part of the candidate, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 2: The Lord's Supper

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly, unless otherwise scheduled. Specific dates will be determined by the pastor. The pastor and/or deacons are authorized to administer the Lord's Supper to any member who is unable to attend regular services. The pastor and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper with the deacons being responsible for the physical preparations. This church practices "Open Communion" - *all those who are believers in Christ are welcome to join us in taking the Lord's Supper.*

Article 8: Church Meetings

Section 1: Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be included in these services. The pastor or someone he shall designate shall direct the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

Section 2: Special Services

Revival services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objective shall be placed on the church calendar.

Section 3: Regular Business Meetings

The church shall hold regular business meetings monthly on the first Sunday of the month. The meetings shall be held immediately following the evening service.

Section 4: Special Business Meetings

The church may conduct special called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one-week notice must be given for the special called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, the time, and the location of the meeting. The special called meeting can only address the matter that the meeting was called for.

Section 5: Quorum

A quorum shall consist of twenty members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a scheduled meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 6: Parliamentary Rules

The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

Section 7: Church Year

The church year shall begin September 1 and end August 31. It shall serve as the basis for association and convention record reporting. This shall also serve as the beginning point for terms of service for teachers, church officers, and committee members, unless otherwise specified by these bylaws.

Section 8: The Budget Year

The budget year shall begin January 1 and end December 31. It shall be used for financial reporting purposes.

Article 9: Amendments

Changes in the constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting. Each amendment shall have been presented in writing at the previous business meeting. Copies of the proposed amendment shall be made available to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of church members present. Amendments to the bylaws shall be passed by a simple majority of the members present and voting.