

BYLAWS OF SIERRA BAPTIST CHURCH ¹

PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of the Bible, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist denomination, and for the purpose of guarding both the individual conscience and the body life of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relationship to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish these bylaws.

I. NAME

This body shall be known as the SIERRA BAPTIST CHURCH OF PIONEER, CALIFORNIA.

II. PRINCIPAL OFFICE

The principal office of the church is fixed and located on the property at 26355 Buckhorn Ridge Road, Pioneer, California 95666. The Active Members of the church shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another upon proper motion, discussion and vote as required by these Bylaws in a Regular or Special Business Meeting.

III. STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE AND FAITH

Section 1. The church has adopted Articles of Faith, a copy of which shall be maintained as part of the Policy and Procedures Manual.

Section 2. The church has adopted a Church Covenant, a copy of which shall be maintained as part of the Policies and Procedures Manual.

IV. GOVERNANCE

Section 1. Polity: The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. To the extent possible, this church will cooperate with and support the Mother Lode Southern Baptist Association, the California Southern Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Section 2. Doctrine: The church affirms the Holy Bible as the inspired, infallible Word of God and as the basis of all our beliefs and practices. The Holy Bible shall take precedence over all other documents, secular or sacred, in the life, decisions, and governance of this church.

Section 3. Moderator: The moderator shall be the pastor or his designee. In the absence of the pastor, and no designee has been assigned, the chairman of the deacons or the clerk shall call the church to order and a

¹ Throughout this document for the purpose of simplicity, the pronouns "he," "him," "his," "they," and "their" indicate neither masculine nor feminine and may be applied to either gender equally, and may also indicate either singular or plural within the context of any section.

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Moderator Pro Tem will be elected.

V. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General: This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church. The membership retains to itself the right of exclusive self-government consistent with the Bible in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be a member of this church and the conditions of such membership. As a condition of membership, each member agrees to accept the Articles of Faith of Sierra Baptist Church, as listed in the Policies and Procedures Manual and conduct themselves in accordance with these Articles. The Church Clerk is responsible for maintaining a current list of members of the church, including those who are active and those who are inactive. Only active members may be elected or chosen as officers, teachers or team members.

Section 2. Candidacy: Any person who offers himself as a candidate for membership in this church is encouraged to attend a new member class prior to being presented to the church for membership. If a new member class is not available, the pastor or a deacon shall meet with the candidate to explain membership expectations found in the Bylaws and to answer questions prior to presenting the candidate for membership. All candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular service or meeting in any of the following ways:

- (a) After a profession of faith and baptism according to the policies of this church.
- (b) By letter from a Baptist church of like faith and order.
- (c) By statement of prior conversion experience and prior baptism in a Baptist church when a letter cannot be obtained.
- (d) By statement of prior conversion experience and New Testament baptism by immersion upon recommendation of the pastor and deacons.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and deacons for investigation. They shall make a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A 90% vote of those present and voting shall be required to elect such candidate to membership.

Section 3. Termination of Membership: Membership shall be terminated by death, exclusion by action of this church, transfer of letter to another Baptist church or becoming affiliated with another church. Should a member become an offense to the church and its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, the church may terminate his membership but only after due notice and hearing, and faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and restoration according to Matthew 18:15-17.

Section 4. Restoration: Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offence may be restored by vote of the church upon evidence of his repentance and reformation or if on account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

Section 5. Classes of Membership: There shall be two classes of members: Active Members, and Inactive/Non-Resident Members.

- (a). Active Members shall meet the following provisions:
 - (1) They shall have fulfilled the requirements for candidacy to membership as stated in these bylaws, and shall have been properly elected to membership.
 - (2) They shall declare they have attended at least twelve (12) regular worship services of the

church during the previous twelve (12) month period, or shall have been actively involved in one or more of the standing or special teams or active ministries of the church, excluding any period prior to the date on which the individual was properly elected to membership in the church. Exceptions due to illness or other unavoidable absence shall require the approval of the church.

- (b). Inactive/Non-Resident Members are defined as those members who fail to satisfy all of the provisions necessary to be defined as an Active Member, or who relocated to an area which makes regular attendance impractical.
- (1) Inactive/Non-Resident members may not vote on any matters before the church so long as they shall remain inactive.
- (2) An Inactive/Non-Resident Member shall automatically be restored to active membership upon satisfaction of all requirements for active membership.
- (c) Following election to their respective positions, the Senior Pastor and other ministerial staff members, and their spouses, shall, upon their petition for membership in the church, automatically qualify as Active Members of the church, notwithstanding the attendance requirement of Section (a), (2) of this article.

Section 6. Voting: Every active resident member of the church age 18 or older is entitled to vote in all matters presented at a business meeting provided the member is present. Only active members, as defined in the bylaws may vote. Under no circumstances can a vote be made by proxy.

VI. CORPORATE OFFICERS

The corporation officers shall be a President, Secretary, and Treasurer and shall be Members for Corporate Purposes.

VII. CHURCH OFFICERS

The officers of this church shall be as follows:

Section 1. Pastor: A 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 provided at least one week's public notice has been given.

The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time, with two weeks termination notice being given by either the church or the pastor. A salary shall be fixed at the time of the call but may be changed by vote of the church at any regular business meeting. Both salary and changes will be by recommendation of the Personnel Team. The salary shall be reviewed at least annually.

The pastor is responsible for leading and equipping the church to function as a New Testament church. He shall be especially concerned to provide leadership in the areas of preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. The pastor shall affirm his agreement with the Articles of Faith and shall conduct himself in a manner that is consistent therewith. The pastor shall be the overseer of the work of the church. As such, he shall be the chief administrative officer of the church in all instances except those matters which are legally the concerns of the Board of Trustees. The pastor shall be guided by the instructions of the church in his capacity as chief administrative officer. The pastor is ex-officio member of all organizations.

Section 2. Church Staff: This church may call or employ such staff members as the church may need. The Personnel Team, in consultation with the pastor(s), shall prepare a job description and present it to the church for approval before recommending any additional staff. Any new staff shall then be employed by church action. The primary responsibility of such staff members should be to serve with the pastor in the spiritual ministry and life of the church.

Section 3. Deacons: After serving for three years, no deacon shall be eligible for re-election until the lapse of one year unless there is no qualified member available to replace him. He may then be re-elected for a one year term. Elections shall be held to fill vacancies.

(a) The qualifications for this office are as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6.

(b) When a vacancy occurs or church membership increases, recommendations for additional deacons shall be made at a regular business meeting by the active deacon body and the pastor. Any nominee must have been an active member of this congregation for at least one full year. These nominees shall be set aside for six months to be evaluated and trained by the pastor, the deacon body, and the church. Evaluation and training applies only to candidates being presented for the first time. At the end of six months, the candidate shall be presented to the church for election. The vote shall be by secret ballot. Each candidate must receive at least 75% (3/4) affirmative vote of the members present and voting. If elected, he shall be commissioned to service by the church.

(c) The deacons shall elect a chairman in October and organize to best perform their ministry. They shall meet as necessary to pray, share concerns, and plan.

(d) Each deacon shall be available to freely confer with the pastor privately about all church matters.

Section 4. Clerk: The clerk, elected annually by the church, shall keep a membership roll and accurate records of all business transacted in all business meetings, and record the church's history. The church clerk will be the secretary of the church corporation.

Section 5. Treasurer: The church shall annually elect a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to pay out all money, upon receipt of bills approved and signed by authorized members and to keep at all times an accurate itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. Payment of bills shall be made promptly by check or electronic transfer and all funds received for denominational or other causes shall be remitted by check *or* electronic transfer at least monthly. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church a monthly-itemized report of receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The church treasurer will be the treasurer of the church corporation.

A report shall be given to the church in its regular business meeting. Within thirty days after the end of each fiscal year, the treasurer shall give to the church an annual report showing the total amount of receipts and an itemized statement of all disbursements. All books, records, and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered property of the church, and written records will be maintained for three years. Any active member of the church may, at reasonable times and for a purpose reasonably related to such member's interest, inspect the Financial Records, Corporate Records, and Membership List. Members may not inspect Giving Records.

Section 6: Church Leadership Team: The Church Leadership Team shall seek to correlate and coordinate the activities and organizations of the church, yet with advisory powers only.

As amended and adopted May 5, 2019

(a) The standing members of the Church Leadership Team shall be composed of the pastor(s), Treasurer, Chairman of the Deacons, Church Clerk, and Education Ministries leaders whose purpose and duties are defined and listed in the Policies and Procedures Manual. Church Ministry Team Leaders will serve ad hoc, as needed, with voting privileges. The pastor shall serve as chairman.

(b) The Church Leadership Team shall meet monthly or quarterly as may be desired or on call of the pastor at any time deemed necessary.

(c) The primary functions of the Church Leadership Team shall consist of the following:

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

(d) All matters agreed upon by the Church Leadership Team, calling for action not already provided for, shall be referred to the church for action.

Section 7. Trustees: Three trustees elected by the church shall hold in trust the church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to sign all legal documents when so required. They shall annually choose a chairman and secretary. The chairman will be the President of the corporation.

Section 8. Agent for Service of Process: The Pastor shall act as Agent for Service of Process or in his absence the Chairman of the Trustees. This officer is an individual who will accept service of process on behalf of the corporation in the event it is sued. The designation as Agent for Service of Process does not expose the individual to any form of liability to a third person.

VIII. CHURCH MINISTRY TEAMS:

For the effective administration of the church and according to need, various teams and ministries may be created and funded. All standing ministry teams approved by the church shall be listed, and their duties outlined, in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

IX. EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

The church shall seek to maintain programs such as, but not limited to, Bible teaching, new member training, music, missions education, outreach and evangelism, and any others the church believes to be helpful in fulfilling its mission and purpose in Christian ministry. Each such program and its purpose or work shall be defined in the Policies and Procedures Manual. All organizations of the church shall be under church control. All officers and ministry team members shall be elected by the church from the active membership roll and report regularly to the church.

X. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services: The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and evening, and

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each Wednesday evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of almighty God. Such meetings shall be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor.

Section 2. Regular and/or Special Business Meetings: Regular business meetings shall be held monthly or quarterly on a designated Wednesday night or Sunday. Should there be any unusual business or matters of unusual interest to be brought before the church, a special business meeting is to be called. Notice shall be given the membership one week prior to the meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impracticable.

Section 3. Quorum: Active members of this church present shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business.

Section 4. Parliamentary Rules: Robert's Rules of Order are adopted as the parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church, the deacons, and the teams.

Section 5. Fiscal Year: The Fiscal Year of the church shall be October 1st through September 30th. The Operational Year, Educational Year, etc., shall be September 1 through August 31.

XI. DISCIPLINE

Section 1. The practice of this church shall be to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. Should any unhappy difference arise between members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in the 18th Chapter of Matthew. Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the cause of Christ, or to the welfare of the church, the pastor and deacons will seek to follow the guidelines listed in the Policies and Procedures Manual. If the member should fail to correct the condition despite the counsel of the pastor and deacons, they may bring a recommendation to the church to declare the member "out of fellowship with the church".

XII. VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

The church shall annually conduct a Vacation Bible School at the time most suitable for all concerned. The director(s) shall be recommended by the Nominating Team to be elected in the August business meeting.

XIII. AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the active members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting of the church, or at a meeting specially called for that purpose; the proposed amendment being inserted in the call; but no change shall be made in III related to "Articles of Faith," and "Covenant" except by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all active members of the church present; said proposed change must be presented in writing at a business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed action, and then announced from the pulpit and made available on the immediate next Sunday.

XIV. DISSOLUTION

A. The property, assets, profits and net income of this corporation are irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes, and no part of the net income, profits or assets of this organization shall ever inure to the benefit of a director, trustee, officer or member of the corporation, or the benefit of any private individual.

B. Upon the winding up and dissolution of this corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the corporation, the remaining assets shall be distributed to the **MOTHER LODE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**, or its successor, a non-profit corporation organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes, which has established its tax exempt status under Section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

XV. REVERSION

A. It was the intention of the founders of this church that it continues as a **Southern Baptist Church in perpetuity**. The lives and energies of many Southern Baptist people; the resources of the church people and others from all levels of Southern Baptist life have been entrusted to the church for this purpose.

B. Should this church, therefore, ever determine to be other than a Southern Baptist Church, all properties and other assets will revert to Southern Baptists, specifically the **Mother Lode Baptist Association** or its successor.