

COVENANT OF COMMUNITY
(Statement of Organization)

Effective Date—February xx, 2021

Preamble

Article I: The Mission and Values of Second Baptist Church

Article II: Membership

Article III: Ministry

Article IV: Congregational Authority

Article V: Vision and Leadership Team

Article VI: Provocative Proposals

Article VII: Implementation Teams

1. Worship
2. Missions
3. Community
4. Communications
5. Reconciliation
6. Discipleship

Article VIII: The Diaconate

Preamble: We, the members of Second Baptist Church, acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord of this church and affirm that we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all that we do. This Covenant of Community is intended to guide us as we seek to discern the Spirit's leadership and to serve as the by-laws that govern the process by which we as a community will make decisions consistent with that discernment.

Article I: The Mission of Second Baptist Church

- A. Second Baptist Church is a community of faith made up of followers of Jesus Christ who are diverse in backgrounds and perspectives and are united in our mission to love and serve God and the world God loves. In fulfillment of this mission, we value ...
 - Worship that is dynamic, spiritual, and relevant;
 - Discipleship rooted in the Bible that leads to deep wisdom and courageous faith;
 - Fellowship that is loving, supportive, and respectful of one another;
 - Ministry that puts people and their unique gifts into partnership with God to share God's love and be a reconciling presence in a divided world.
- B. We value our Baptist heritage. We seek opportunities to cooperate with other Baptist organizations and churches as well as churches and faith communities from other traditions as we provide ministry to our neighbors at home and around the world. This Covenant of Community is intended to guide this community as we work together to fulfill our mission.
- C. Second Baptist Church shall be recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The VLT as described in article V below shall have full congregational authority to file legal documents and/or applications periodically as required by any state and/or governmental entity consistent with the purpose of maintaining an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax exemption.

Article II: Membership

Second Baptist Church is comprised of persons who confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives and who have given witness to this relationship through Christian baptism. A person seeking membership will be received in one of the following ways:

- A. By confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- B. By transfer of letter from another Baptist church;
- C. By statement that you are a Christian and have experienced Christian baptism in another tradition; or
- D. By request for affiliate membership (for those who wish to retain membership in their home church).

Article III: Ministry

At Second Baptist Church, every member is a minister. We value a team approach to ministry with pastors and lay ministers working collaboratively. Members covenant to share special gifts, time, and money in the work of the church.

A. Pastoral Team

1. Pastors are **persons who have been called to and ordained to the pastoral ministry** to guide us on the spiritual journey and help equip us for ministry.
2. Pastors work together as a team with the Senior Pastor serving as the primary leader.
3. Pastors are called to Second Baptist Church and approved by a vote of the Congregation.

B. Vision and Leadership Team

1. Second Baptist Church is guided in specific areas of ministry by the Vision and Leadership Team comprised of lay ministers and the Senior Pastor.
2. The composition and election of the Vision and Leadership Team is defined in Article V below.

Article IV: Congregational Authority

- A. Each member of the church community is entitled to one vote in all matters submitted to the Congregation.
- B. **█** The chairperson or any duly designated member of the Vision and Leadership Team is authorized to sign, as representative(s) of the church, deeds, notes, deeds of trust, transfers, leases, assignments, or other legal documents **approved by the Vision and Leadership Team**.
- C. The Congregation recognizes the freedom of the Vision and Leadership Team and Implementation Teams to work within the boundaries assigned herein.
- D. As a community of faith, we highly regard consensus-based decision making; every attempt will be made to reach decisions in this manner. If the moderator is concerned that there is not a consensus on a recommendation, the moderator may postpone the motion once, until the next Church Conference.
- E. The Congregation will meet in conference at least four times a year. Special meetings may be called by the Chair of the Vision and Leadership Team or by a majority of the Vision and Leadership Team, with a minimum of seven (7) days advance notice.

- F. No more than five (5) years will elapse without review of this Covenant by a task force to be appointed by the Vision and Leadership Team. If revised, the Covenant of Community must be approved by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at a regular Church Conference or at a special meeting called for that purpose. Notice giving the wording of the proposed revision will be given at least thirty (30) days prior to the vote. Amendments from the floor will not be considered.
- G. Notification of called meetings will be by at least two of the following methods:
 - 1. Announcing in regular worship;
 - 2. Publishing in *The Second Page*;
 - 3. Mailing to each family of the church;
 - 4. Sending electronically to each family of the church.

Article V: Vision and Leadership Team

A. Purpose

To envision the future of the church as defined in existing, revised, or newly written Provocative Proposals; to empower and oversee the work of Implementation Teams in addressing these Provocative Proposals as needed; and to act on behalf of the Congregation in carrying out the **ministry and legal duties** of the church.

B. Membership and Term of Office

The Vision and Leadership Team shall be comprised of **the following** members:

- 1. Six at-large members: 3 yr terms (staggered); voting
- 2. Chair of the Diaconate: ex officio; voting **(1 vote only, even if co-chairs)**
- 3. Senior Pastor: ex-officio; voting unless declines
- 4. Finance Representative: as designated; no term; non-voting
- 5. Secretary: as designated; no term; non-voting

C. Method of Election

- 1. Nominations for the at-large positions will be solicited from the Congregation. All nominees must be members of Second Baptist Church **for at least two years** and exhibit appropriate personal integrity and leadership ability, good reputation in the community, commitment to family, and stewardship of his or her time, talents and financial resources on behalf of the church.
- 2. Nominees will be interviewed and qualified based on the criteria above by a committee composed of current members of the Vision and Leadership Team and a task force of

five members appointed by the Chair of the Diaconate. No members of this committee or family members of someone on this committee can be nominees. ~~The final slate of nominees shall not include more than one member per family.~~

3. A final slate of candidates will be presented to the membership for selection by secret ballot voting. There is no maximum number of candidates which may be included on the slate.
4. ~~Members may vote only once for any candidate and may only vote for the number of candidates needed to fill the number of open positions. The candidate(s) who receive the most votes corresponding to the number of open positions will become the new at-large members of the Vision and Leadership Team, with the exception that no more than one member of any immediate family may serve at any time.~~
5. The Finance Representative and Secretary shall be appointed by the Vision and Leadership Team.
6. Selection of the Vision and Leadership Team Chair and Chair-Elect will be determined by the Vision and Leadership Team with a secret-ballot vote at the first meeting of the year. Co-chairs are not allowed.

D. Responsibilities

1. Oversee Implementation Teams
 - a. Meet with Implementation Teams, act upon their recommendations, and hold them accountable for reaching the goals stated in the Provocative Proposals.
 - b. Receive and review budget recommendations from Implementation Teams.
 - c. Revise Provocative Proposals as needed, understanding that the Congregation is the final authority as to any revision.
2. Business Administration
 - a. Make financial and business decisions on behalf of the church, and if necessary, recommend these decisions to the Congregation for final approval. This includes but is not limited to reviewing monthly expenditures, receipts, and financial decisions of the church. ~~Members shall be recused from any decision that might reasonably suggest a personal or business conflict of interest.~~
 - b. Develop, and revise if needed, policies for the handling of contributions, financial record-keeping and accounting.
 - c. Make recommendations concerning the establishment and maintenance of relationships between the church and financial institutions.

- d. Assist the pastoral team and Diaconate in conducting the annual church-wide stewardship emphasis.
- e. Having reviewed budget recommendations from Implementation Teams and staff, prepare and present an Annual Operating Budget for adoption by the Congregation.

3. Personnel

- a. Maintain confidentiality of decision making in all personnel matters.
- b. Act as mediator between the Congregation and its employees and resolve any disputes or grievances on behalf of or concerning staff.
- c. Review and revise as needed the Personnel Policies Manual for church employees to ensure fairness and equity in all areas.
- d. Review and revise as needed the job descriptions for any staff position at the church.
- e. Oversee and approve the creation of any new positions and any changes in status of current personnel.
- f. Recommend to the Congregation the employment and/or termination of any member of the pastoral staff.
- g. Make decisions as to the terms of employment or termination of employment of any staff not including pastoral staff.
- h. Oversee the evaluation of all staff including pastoral staff.
- i. **Meet in executive session to discuss personnel issues.**

4. Form a Senior Pastor Search Committee (SPSC) when needed

- a. Nominations – The Vision and Leadership Team will request nominations from the Congregation. The nomination period will last for at least two weeks.
- b. Selection Committee- After the nomination period closes, the Vision and Leadership Team will contact the nominees, only to determine who would be willing to serve if selected. The Vision and Leadership Team will then form a Selection Committee of 14 persons, comprised of Vision and Leadership Team Members and Deacons who have not been nominated or who have removed themselves from consideration for the SPSC.
- c. Size – The SPSC will be seven (7) members with only one person per family.

- d. Election –The Selection Committee will interview willing nominees, discuss and determine the most appropriate criteria, and present a slate of seven (7) to the Diaconate for approval. The Vision and Leadership Team Chair will present the slate to the Congregation for a vote. A simple majority is required to elect the slate. Nominations from the floor will not be accepted.
- e. Responsibilities – The SPSC will solicit input from a cross section of the Congregation to determine preferences for the senior pastor. The SPSC will locate, investigate and interview suitable prospects. They will then recommend a final candidate to the Vision and Leadership Team. Upon an affirmative vote of the Vision and Leadership Team, the search committee will extend an invitation to the final candidate to preach in view of a call.
- f. Replacement – Should a SPSC member or members resign prior to the end of service, the Vision and Leadership Team and the Selection Committee will assist the SPSC to determine if a replacement is needed and select that replacement if necessary.

5. Facilities

- a. Ensure that church facilities are being adequately maintained with respect to:
 - 1. Insurance and all safety inspections
 - 2. Kitchen and food service
 - 3. Property management, building maintenance, and landscaping
 - 4. Interior design and building improvements
 - 5. Machinery, vehicles, and office equipment
- b. Formulate and recommend policies concerning the use of the building and all church properties and the purchase of new equipment for the church.
- c. Ensure that the appropriate reserve accounts are maintained to cover insurance, building repair and equipment.
- d. Recommend building projects by studying the church's needs.
- e. Oversee all room arrangements and furniture setups needed for efficient building use and programming.

6. Appoint all pastoral search committees except the Senior Pastor Search Committee.

7. Conduct Church Conferences and present recommendations in Church Conference when Congregational approval is needed.

8. Appoint a secretary to record minutes of the Vision and Leadership Team meetings as well as all Church Conferences and file a copy of the minutes of both meetings in the church office.
9. Assist the Community Implementation Team in filling any vacancies on any Implementation Team, committee, sub-committee, or task force appointed by the Vision and Leadership Team. This would involve the enlistment and nomination of members, according to their gifts and interests, in consultation with current Implementation Team chairs and related pastoral staff.

E. Committees/Task Forces

The Vision and Leadership Team may appoint and empower any individual, committee, sub-committee, or task force needed to assist in the performance of any responsibility described in this section.

F. Meetings

1. The Vision and Leadership Team will meet at least one time per month.
2. A quorum will consist of a simple majority of the Vision and Leadership Team.
3. Members will be recused during deliberations and voting on matters where a conflict of interest might exist.
4. All pastoral team members except the Senior Pastor, if attending the meeting, will be recused during deliberations and voting on personnel matters.
5. A brief report of Vision and Leadership Team action will be published in *The Second Page* as needed.

Article VI: Provocative Proposals: The following Provocative Proposals, approved by the Congregation, describe the vision of Second Baptist Church.

- A. Worship-** 2B's Worship is a dynamic and spirit-filled fusion of diverse styles, traditions, music and cultures. Worship opens us to transforming encounters with Christ, with each other, and calls us to action.
- B. Missions-** 2B believes mission is a way of life. We discover and live out our personal missional calling.
- C. Community-** 2B is a beloved community, affirming, supporting and sharing life together. We each have deep, accepting, personal connections within the church family.
- D. Communications-** 2B communicates in ways that are engaging, comprehensive, and cutting edge, with relevance to a 21st century world.

E. Reconciliation- 2B believes in Christ's message of inclusion, justice, peacemaking, and reconciliation. We engage the world in thoughtful dialogue on the most challenging issues of the day in a faith-informed context.

F. Discipleship- 2B cultivates deep wisdom and courageous faith. Rooted in the Biblical story and inspired by saints, past and present, we are faithful followers of Christ.

Article VII. Implementation Teams

A. Purpose: Carry out the vision of each corresponding Provocative Proposal.

B. Creation/Composition/Terms

1. Each Implementation Team shall be comprised of 1) related pastoral staff, 2) chair, 3) secretary, and 4) members who represent a cross section of the Congregation.
2. Members of each Implementation Team will be recruited by the Community Implementation Team with input from the Vision and Leadership Team. Each person serving on an Implementation Team will serve staggered **three** year terms with new terms beginning January 1. Every effort will be made to diversify and energize Implementation Teams by the inclusion of new and different people each year. Implementation Team members may serve one additional consecutive term; however, consideration may be given to those existing members who wish to continue to serve.
3. Implementation Teams will be created or dissolved as needed each year by the Vision and Leadership Team in response to the changing needs and vision of the church.
4. New Chairs and Implementation Team members will be installed annually in a regular church conference.

C. Responsibilities

1. Determine, review, and implement SMART Goals needed to carry out the vision of each Provocative Proposal.
2. Determine, review, and implement steps to achieve the SMART goals.
3. Appoint, empower, and oversee the work of any individual, committee, sub-committee, or task force needed to assist in the performance of any responsibility associated with carrying out the vision of each Provocative Proposal.
4. Prepare and propose to the Vision and Leadership Team an annual Implementation Team budget.

D. Meetings

1. Each Implementation Team will determine its meeting time, place and frequency.
2. Each Implementation Team will appoint a secretary to record the minutes of its meetings and forward a copy of the minutes to the Vision and Leadership Team Chair and the church office.

E. Provocative Proposals and Corresponding Implementation Teams

1. Worship Implementation Team

- a. Provocative Proposal #1: 2B's Worship is a dynamic and spirit-filled fusion of diverse styles, traditions, music and cultures. Worship opens us to transforming encounters with Christ, with each other, and calls us to action.
- b. Responsibilities (in addition to those stated in Section C. above)
 1. Meet and work with related pastoral staff to review and make suggestions regarding all matters related to the music ministry, music education, and fine arts.
 2. Provide enhancements for use in weekly worship.
 3. Provide enhancements for the liturgical seasons of the church year.
 4. Assist the pastoral team in Congregational worship education.
 5. Create, coordinate, and facilitate the use of liturgical arts and physical properties as they relate to the services of worship.
 6. Coordinate and assist with arrangements for all ordinances.
 7. Conduct training sessions for reading and praying in worship.
 8. Enlist and facilitate training of the Audio/Visual Team and arrange for the operation of all AV equipment for all church services.

2. Missions Implementation Team

- a. Provocative Proposal (#2) "2B believes mission is a way of life. We discover and live out our personal missional calling."

b. Responsibilities (in addition to those stated in Section C. above)

1. Lead the Congregation in discovering each person's gifts and call to ministry.
2. Provide ways for the Congregation to engage in ministry on an ongoing basis.
3. Facilitate the involvement of groups and individual members in mission and ministry projects.
4. Provide for the mission education of children, youth, and adults in coordination with Discipleship Implementation Team.

3. Community Implementation Team

a. Provocative Proposal (#3): "2B is a beloved community, affirming, supporting and sharing life together. We each have deep, accepting, personal connections within the church family."

b. Responsibilities (in addition to those stated in Section C. above)

1. Foster and promote fellowship and communication throughout the church.
2. Provide input from the Congregation to the Vision and Leadership Team and staff.
3. Conduct Congregational surveys to determine the Congregational needs and to determine members' gifts for service.
4. Determine methods for identifying prospective members and inactive members.
5. Coordinate and schedule new and prospective member orientations and social events.
6. Assist new members in finding their place of involvement in the life of the church or in creating small groups to help create community.
7. Utilize creative ways to inform prospective members about our church.
8. Fill vacancies on any Implementation Team, committee, sub-committee, or task force appointed by the Vision and Leadership Team. This would involve the enlistment and nomination of members, according to their gifts and interests, in consultation with current Implementation Team chairs, the Vision and Leadership Team, and related pastoral staff.

4. Communication Implementation Team

- a. Provocative Proposal (#4): “2B communicates in ways that are engaging, comprehensive, and cutting edge, with relevance to a 21st century world.”
- b. Responsibilities (in addition to those stated in Section C. above)
 - 1. Research and determine the most effective, up to date, and, and cost-efficient forms of internal and external communication.
 - 2. Provide education when needed to the staff, Vision and Leadership Team, other Implementation Teams, and the Congregation as to the most effective forms of communication.
 - 3. Assist the staff and other Implementation Teams in publicizing church activities, educational opportunities, and ministries utilizing relevant technology and graphic skills.

5. Reconciliation Implementation Team

- a. Provocative Proposal (#5): “2B believes in Christ’s message of inclusion, justice, peacemaking, and reconciliation. We engage the world in thoughtful dialogue **and** **gracious action** on the most challenging issues of the day in a faith-informed context.”
- b. Responsibilities (in addition to those stated in Section C. above)
 - 1. Identify the most challenging issues of the day.
 - 2. Provide opportunities for education and skill development to encourage mature Christian discourse, particularly among differing viewpoints.
 - 3. Plan and publicize church-wide events incorporating experts, speakers, literature, and anything else necessary to promote thoughtful dialogue **and** **gracious action** regarding the most challenging issues of the day.

6. Discipleship Implementation Team

- a. Provocative Proposal (#6): “2B cultivates deep wisdom and courageous faith. Rooted in the Biblical story and inspired by saints, past and present, we are faithful followers of Christ.”
- b. Responsibilities (in addition to those stated in Section C. above)
 - 1. Determine through consultation with the Congregation and community what programs and ministries are needed to meet Christian discipleship needs of Second Baptist Church and the wider community.
 - 2. Continually search for new models that will enlarge our vision of possibilities and programs in Christian Discipleship.

Article VIII: The Diaconate

- A. Purpose: To provide leadership to the Congregation in areas of caregiving and stewardship of resources. To provide spiritual guidance to the church with regard to missions and ministry. To lead the church by serving.
- B. Responsibilities of the Diaconate
 - 1. Regularly review the work of its committees.
 - 2. Work with the pastoral staff to meet the pastoral care and spiritual needs of the church.
 - 3. Provide spiritual leadership in the stewardship of resources.
 - 4. Coordinate with the Vision and Leadership Team to sponsor one annual Congregational State of the Church meeting.
 - 5. Oversee the nomination of a slate of members for election by the Congregation to fill vacancies as needed on the Vision and Leadership Team (see Vision and Leadership Team Article V. D.)
 - 6. After a person has presented himself or herself to the Diaconate and requested ordination to the Pastoral Ministry, the Chair of the Diaconate, together with the Senior Pastor and the Vision and Leadership Team Chair, will form an ordination council to establish guidelines appropriate to each candidate, to oversee the ordination process, and to make the recommendation to the Church regarding ordination.

C. Deacons

1. Nomination of New Deacons

Nomination of new deacons will take place as called for by the Deacon Executive Committee (DEC). The DEC will decide the number of new deacons needed and publish the approximate number when requesting nominations. Nominations to the Diaconate will be made by the Congregation. Nominations will be taken for a period of fifteen (15) days to include three (3) Sundays and two (2) Wednesday nights. The qualifications for Deacon Prospects will be published and will include:

- a. Be a member of Second Baptist Church for a minimum of two (2) years.
- b. Live in ministry consistent with Christ's example of service in love to others and discipline themselves to grow spiritually through worship, prayer and Bible study.
- c. Set an example in monetary stewardship to Second Baptist Church by tithing or working toward tithing

- d. Serve in a specific place of ministry, share God's love, and invite others to participate at Second Baptist Church
- 2. Upon receipt of the list of nominations from the Congregation, the DEC will appoint a task force to select a slate of candidates. The slate will be presented to the DEC for approval. Upon approval, the slate will be brought to the Diaconate for approval by acclamation.
 - a. Election and Ordination of New Deacons

The candidates approved by the Diaconate will train and serve as deacon interns for six (6) months. At the end of that period, the names of final candidates will be published at least twice (2) in the two (2) weeks prior to the election by the Congregation in morning worship services. Ordination will follow as soon as practical.
 - b. Expectations for a Deacon

Deacons of Second Baptist Church are individuals who acknowledge a call and gift for service to God through Second Baptist Church. Deacons are expected to serve the Congregation in a majority of the following tangible ways:

 - 1. Lead in worship by praying.
 - 2. Visit and minister to those in the Congregation with special needs.
 - 3. Shepherd new church members.
 - 4. Lead in the ordinance of communion by preparing and serving the elements.
 - 5. Lead in the ordinance of baptism by assisting candidates.
 - 6. Mentor and train deacon interns in their responsibilities.
 - 7. Serve the needs of members and families during times of grief by assisting with memorial services.
 - 8. Serve fellowship meals on Wednesday evenings.
 - 9. Set an example in monetary stewardship by tithing or working toward tithing.
 - c. Transfers: An ordained deacon from another church may make a request to the chair of the Diaconate to serve as a deacon of Second Baptist Church. The chair will appoint a task force to interview and make a recommendation to the DEC regarding the individual's request. Upon a positive recommendation, the individual will serve as a deacon intern for six (6) months and at the end of that period be affirmed as a Second Baptist deacon at the next meeting of the Diaconate.
 - d. Resignation of Deacons

A deacon may resign by written notice to the chair. No further action will be required of the deacon or the Diaconate.
 - e. Temporary Leave of Absence

A deacon requesting a leave of absence may do so by written notice to the chair. The deacon will be expected to notify the chair and resume regular responsibilities when able.

f. Retirement from Deacon Service

A deacon who has faithfully served but is no longer able to fulfill the responsibilities of a deacon may notify the chair and be recognized with the status of Deacon Emeritus.

3. Deacon Executive Committee (DEC)

a. The DEC will consist of the following positions:

1. Chair
2. Chair-Elect
3. Secretary
4. Chair of each standing committee
5. Related pastoral staff member

- b. The Chair elect will create and work with a task force to recruit deacons to serve as Standing Ministry Team Leaders for the following year. The Chair elect will recommend the proposed committee to the Diaconate no later than the last day of November of each year. The DEC will fill any vacancies occurring during the year and will report the filling of the vacancy at the next meeting of the Diaconate.
- c. The DEC may recommend adding or dissolving standing committees of the Diaconate and may establish and dissolve task forces created for special purposes.
- d. The DEC will meet as needed to plan the work of the Diaconate and to set dates for regular meetings. Special meetings may be called by the chair.

4. Standing Ministry Teams

- a. Care Ministry Team will assign deacons to serve the Congregation by visiting the hospitals, leading worship, serving meals and other duties as requested.
- b. Special Needs Ministry Team will coordinate and train deacons as well as others interested in this ministry to visit and assist those in the Congregation with special needs.
- c. Benevolence Ministry Team will recruit and train deacons as well as others interested in this ministry to act as ushers for services held at the church and serve as hosts for meals prepared for family members. When requested by the staff, the Benevolence Committee will also coordinate any food or other services needed at a time of grief or loss.
- d. Ordinance Ministry Team will prepare the elements for communion, train and assign deacons to serve communion, and recruit deacons to assist with the ordinance of baptism. The chair will serve on the Worship Division.

- e. Deacon Shepherding Ministry Team will train and assign deacons to welcome and nurture new members of the church. They will also serve on the Congregational Involvement/Outreach Division.
- 5. Stephen Ministry
 - a. A representative of the Stephen Ministry will routinely inform the Diaconate of the work of the ministry.