

West Side Baptist Church

BYLAWS

Article I. Church Membership

Section 1: General

The church was created by God to be His instrument for reaching those who need to hear His message of love and forgiveness from sin through faith in Christ Jesus and to encourage and equip believers for service to Him. God designed the local church to function like a body with Christ as its head. Therefore, church membership is only for those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son and as the only way to a personal relationship with God.

Local church membership is not to be entered into lightly, for it is an expression of membership in the body of Christ and provides the opportunity and obligation to exercise the gifts given by God for His honor and glory. Each member shall be active in seeking, and the congregation shall be diligent in assisting in the discovery of, the individual's rightful place in the ministry of Christ and his church. The members shall be faithful in discharging these Christian responsibilities and mindful of their Christian witness at all times. As an autonomous and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ, the membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

Section 2: Manner of Reception

- A. Any person may present himself or herself as a candidate for membership or associate membership in this church in any of the following ways:
- 1) Profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior followed by baptism by immersion
 - 2) Letter of transfer from another Southern Baptist congregation
 - 3) Statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion if no letter is obtainable
 - 4) Statement of faith in Christ as personal Savior and subsequent baptism by immersion if coming from a denomination which does not practice immersion
- B. Upon a candidate's fulfillment of requirements, that person's name will be presented at the next regular business meeting for a vote on membership. Membership will be effective upon an affirmative vote. Should there be any concerns about a candidate, those concerns shall be referred to the Pastor and Deacons for resolution before the vote occurs.
- C. Restoration of active membership may take place in the following ways:
- 1) Disciplined Member. An individual removed from membership by the process described in Article I, Section 7 shall be restored to membership upon recommendation of the Deacons and a three-fourths majority vote of the active members present and voting at a special business meeting.

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- 2) Inactive Member. An individual classified as inactive may request restoration to the active list by recommendation of the Pastor or Deacons, whose responsibility is to seek out and encourage inactive members to become active in church life.

Section 3. New Member Orientation

The church will provide an orientation program for its new members. The program will assist new members in their growth as new believers and/or new members of the congregation and will guide them to a better understanding of the Word of God, Baptist beliefs and the core beliefs and system of governance of West Side Baptist Church.

Section 4. Rights of Members

- A. Every member is entitled to spiritual care by the Pastor and other spiritual leaders of the church.
- B. Every active member of the church who is at least 15 years old is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in business meetings, provided the member is present in the meeting. Church members who are working or volunteering in a church-sanctioned activity elsewhere on the church campus may vote by proxy ballot.

Section 5. Classification of Membership

- A. Active members are those who regularly avail themselves of opportunities for Christian growth and fellowship in the spirit of the Church Covenant. Active members may include homebound members.
- B. Inactive members are those who live at such a distance from the church as to make impossible or impractical the performance of their membership responsibilities, as well as those who for other reasons have chosen not to participate regularly in the life and mission of the church.
- C. Associate members are students or other persons living temporarily in the area who desire the spiritual fellowship and care of a local church without terminating membership in their home church.

Section 6. Termination of Membership

Any of the following constitutes a valid reason for termination of membership:

- A. Death of the member
- B. Transfer of letter to another Southern Baptist congregation. A letter of transfer is the property of the congregation and shall go from the granting to the receiving congregation.
- C. Withdrawal upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination
- D. Removal from the membership roll upon recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons when there is sufficient cause for taking such action. Such causes include church discipline or a long period of inactive member status. A three-fourths majority vote of the active members present and voting at a business meeting.

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Section 7. Discipline

It shall be the practice of this church to take every reasonable measure to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, Deacons, and other ministerial staff are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption.

Should a member become a serious liability to the general welfare of the church, the Pastor and two additional persons selected by the Deacons shall first attempt to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. Finally, if it becomes necessary to remove a member from the church roll, a three-fourths majority of the active members present and voting at a special business meeting of the church is required.

A person whose name has been removed from the church roll may request restoration of membership. The Deacons shall determine if repentance and reconciliation have been demonstrated. Upon recommendation from the Deacons, membership shall be restored by a three-fourths majority vote of the active members present and voting at a special business meeting.

Section 8. Membership Register and Records

The church shall maintain and keep secure in the church office a record of baptisms and a register of names of members, with dates of their admission, transfer or withdrawal, death, or removal.

Article II. Church Ministerial Staff

The ministerial team of the church shall be the Pastor and other members of the ministerial staff.

Section 1. Pastor

- A. The Pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The Pastor equips and guides other members of the Ministerial Staff, Deacons and Church Council in fulfilling the mission of the church.
- B. The Pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in the church. He shall work with the other ministerial staff to lead the church in the fulfillment of its mission. The Pastor will serve ex-officio on all groups and focus on the following tasks:
 - 1) To proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers
 - 2) To care for church members and other persons in the community
 - 3) To provide appropriate orientation for new members and oversee their integration into the life of the church
 - 4) To administer the ordinances of the church
- C. A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. A Pastor Search Team, composed of 5-7 active church members, shall be nominated by the Nominating Group to seek a suitable Pastor. They shall also nominate the chair of the Pastor Search Team. The church must then approve the Pastor Search Team by a three-fourths majority of active

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members present and voting at a regular or special business meeting of the church. During this meeting, any church member has the privilege of making other nominations according to the policy established by the church. After investigating the background, beliefs, and practices of candidates, the Pastor Search Team shall bring before the church only one name at a time. Its recommendation constitutes a nomination. The vote on this candidate shall take place at a meeting designated for that purpose, of which one week's public notice shall be given. Election shall be by written ballot and a three-fourths majority of active members present and voting is necessary for approval.

- D. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the Pastor's or the church's request. If resigning the position, the Pastor shall give at least thirty days' notice unless another arrangement has been made with the Personnel Group. A motion to terminate a Pastor's service can come from any active member and shall be referred to the Chair of the Deacons for investigation by the Personnel Group and the Deacons. This investigation must be handled in a fair and open manner and every effort made toward reconciliation. After the investigation has been completed, any motion to terminate the Pastor's service shall be brought by the Personnel Group at a special business meeting. Prior to church notification, the Personnel Group shall notify the Pastor. Once a Special Business Meeting is scheduled to address the Personnel Group's recommendation, notice of the meeting must be published in the church bulletin for at least two successive Sundays. Termination requires a three-fourths majority of all those present and voting at this business meeting. In event of termination, a minimum of one month's compensation is required, with three months' compensation preferred.
- E. In the absence of a Pastor, the Deacons shall select someone to provide oversight of the pastoral ministries of the church until an interim pastor is appointed and approved by the church body.
- F. The Personnel Group shall coordinate annual performance evaluations of the Pastor and provide a summary to the Deacons.

Section 2. Ministerial Staff

- A. Full or part-time ministerial staff members shall be called and employed as the church determines the need. A job description and benefits statement shall be prepared by the Personnel Group and approved by the church when the need for a staff member is determined. Ministerial staff members shall exhibit evidence of a personal call of God to ministry. The process of selection, calling, and termination shall be the same as for the Pastor.
- B. Full-time and part-time ministerial staff must be members of West Side Baptist Church. A position may be filled on an interim basis by a member of another church with similar beliefs and core values.
- C. The ministerial staff shall serve under the direction of the Pastor. In the absence of the Pastor, Church Council, in conjunction with the existing staff, shall designate a staff member to oversee the ministerial staff.
- D. The Personnel Group shall coordinate annual performance evaluations of all ministerial staff and provide a summary to the Pastor.

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Article III. Non-Ministerial Support Staff

- A. Non-ministerial staff members may be employed when the church determines the need for their services and when volunteer staff is no longer adequate. Job descriptions and benefits statements shall be written by the Personnel Group and approved by the church when the need for such positions is determined. The Personnel Group shall recommend to the church the employment or termination of non-ministerial staff. Employment or termination of services shall be made with the recommendation of the Business Manager in concurrence with the Pastor and, as appropriate, in consultation with related groups. Should either the church or the non-ministerial staff person desire a termination of services, the one party shall give the other at least two weeks' written notice of such intention.
- B. Non-ministerial staff need not be members of West Side Baptist Church; however, they must be members of a church with similar beliefs and core values.
- C. The Personnel Group shall coordinate annual performance evaluations of all non-ministerial staff and provide a summary to the Pastor.

Article IV. Deacons

- A. The scriptural qualifications for a Deacon are found in Acts 6:3-8 and 1Timothy 3:8-12. In accordance with New Testament practice, Deacons shall exemplify faithfulness, support the full program of the church, and participate in all aspects of church life: in worship, witness, discipleship, and stewardship.
- B. Prospective Deacons must be at least 21 years of age. They must be active members of West Side Baptist Church for two years before their term of office begins. If they have been previously ordained in a Southern Baptist church, the requirement of active membership shall be one year before term of office begins. Those Deacons elected who have not been previously ordained shall be presented to the church for ordination.
- C. The church size determines the size of the Deacon Body. The church shall elect one Deacon for every ten families of the congregation, and no more than fifteen families may be assigned to each Deacon before additional Deacons are elected. New Deacons may be elected as necessitated by church growth or a Deacon's incapacity to serve in an active role. Candidates shall be recommended to the church by the Deacon Body. However, any church member has the privilege of making other nominations according to the policy established by the church.
- D. Deacons shall be elected to serve a three-year term. After serving a term of three years, a Deacon shall be eligible for reelection to a second three-year term. After two terms, a Deacon is not eligible for reelection until one year elapses. Deacons shall serve on a rotational basis, with the assigned term of office of one-third of the Deacons to expire each year.

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- E. In the performance of their duties, Deacons shall zealously guard the unity of the spirit within the church. Their task is to assist the Pastor and other ministerial staff in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare and pastoral care of the church. In particular, they shall do the following:
- 1) Adhere to the provisions of the Deacon Covenant
 - 2) Maintain the church fellowship, especially by working with new and inactive members and caring for a specified number of church families
 - 3) Aid in administering the ordinance of the Lord's Supper
 - 4) Provide for pulpit supply when needed
- F. In the absence of a Pastor, the Deacons shall appoint an Interim Pastor Search Team for the purpose of recommending to the congregation an Interim Pastor.
- G. The Chair of the Deacons shall be elected by the Deacon Body to serve for one year. This person may be reelected to this position of leadership for an additional one-year term. A full year shall elapse, after serving a second one-year term, before a person serving as Chair of the Deacons can be reelected to this position. A Vice-Chair shall be elected at the same time as the Chair. The Vice-Chair shall assume all duties and responsibilities in the absence of the Chair, including serving as a member of the Church Council. The Deacons shall have other officers and organization as their responsibilities and duties require.

Article V. Church Officers

Elected church officers shall exemplify faithfulness, support the full program of the church, and participate in all aspects of church life: in worship, witness, discipleship, and stewardship.

Section 1: Moderator

- A. The church shall elect a Moderator to preside over church business meetings. In the absence of the Moderator, the Deacon Chair shall preside. The Moderator shall serve a three-year term; a full year must elapse before this person is eligible for reelection to this position.
- B. The Moderator shall serve on Church Council as an additional voice of the church.

Section 2: Clerk

The church shall annually elect a Clerk as its clerical officer. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, including accurate minutes of all church business meetings. All church records are church property and shall be kept secure in the church office.

Section 3: Assistant Clerk

The church shall annually elect an Assistant Clerk to assist the Clerk as needed. In the absence or incapacity of the Clerk, the Assistant Clerk shall perform those duties listed for the Clerk.

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Section 4: Treasurer

- A. The church shall annually elect a Treasurer as its financial officer. This person shall work closely with the Business Manager employed by the church. Unless covered by the criminal loss provision of the church insurance policy, both the Treasurer and the Business Manager shall be bonded, with the church paying for the bonds.
- B. Upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, the Treasurer, in coordination with the Business Manager, shall 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. Any unbudgeted expenditures require approval of the Stewardship and Finance Group.
- C. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to present to the church at its regular business meetings reports of receipts and disbursements. The Treasurer's report and records shall be audited according to procedures established by the Trustees. The auditor's report shall be made to the church at the next regular business meeting following the completion of the audit.
- D. Upon the Treasurer's presentation of the annual financial report at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the church, these records shall be kept and preserved as part of the permanent records of the church.
- E. The Treasurer may serve up to three consecutive one-year terms. A period of one year must elapse before they are eligible for reelection to this position.
- F. If for any reason, the Treasurer is unable to fulfill the assigned duties, the Leader of the Stewardship and Finance Group will assume all duties until a new Treasurer can be elected.

Section 5: Trustees

- A. The church shall elect three Trustees to serve as the legal officers of the church. They shall hold in trust the church assets. 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. When the signatures of Trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, rental of property, or any other legal documents related to church-approved matters.
- B. The Trustees shall annually elect one of their members to be the Trustee Chair. The Trustee Chair shall serve on Church Council. If for any reason the Trustee Chair is unable to attend a Church Council meeting, the Trustee Chair will designate another Trustee to attend in his or her place.
- C. The Trustees shall be responsible for assuring that the church is adequately covered in various loss, liability and risk management aspects of insurance.
- D. The Trustees shall oversee memorials, endowments, and gifts to the church.
- E. The Trustees shall establish audit procedures for the Treasurer's reports and records.

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- F. Each Trustee shall serve a six-year term on a rotational basis, with one new Trustee being elected every two years. A full year must elapse before a person serving as a Trustee can be reelected to this position.

Article VI. Ministry Support

The church shall use lay ministry teams to carry out its mission of fellowship, evangelism, worship, discipleship, and administration in partnership with the ministerial staff.

Each team shall be assigned responsibility for an area of ministry, and that responsibility shall be divided among the groups that constitute that team. Each of the teams shall be led by a Team Coordinator. A new team can be formed at any time, upon review of need and approval by Church Council. The new team shall be reported to the church at the next regular business meeting.

All those in ministry support shall exemplify faithfulness, support the full program of the church, and participate in all aspects of church life: in worship, witness, discipleship, and stewardship.

Section 1: Group Structure

- A. A new group may be formed by the Team Coordinator with approval of Church Council as deemed necessary to carry out the team mission. A group may be disbanded and eliminated when the Team Coordinator and Church Council agree that the group is no longer needed to fulfill the team function or church mission.
- B. The membership of the groups within each team shall include active members and/or associate members, as defined by these Bylaws in Article I, Section 5. Group members may also include other persons who actively participate in the life of the church, although not yet members, unless the Group membership is limited to active members in the Operations Manual. Groups may be reassigned from a specific team to the oversight of ministerial staff when appropriate.
- C. The members of each group shall be enlisted annually by the Nominating Group in coordination with Team Coordinators and Group Leaders. Group members shall be reported to the church at the next regular business meeting. A church vote is not necessary to approve group members, and they may serve consecutive terms, with the exception of specific groups defined in the Operations Manual.
- D. The specific job descriptions for each group shall be outlined in the Operations Manual. The Team Coordinator is responsible for providing a Group job description for inclusion in the Operations Manual.

Section 2: Group Leaders

- A. Group Leaders shall be active members as defined by Article 1, Section 5. They shall be enlisted by the Nominating Group and approved by the church. A Group Leader may serve up

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to three consecutive one-year terms. A full year shall elapse, after serving three consecutive terms, before a person serves another term as Group Leader.

- B. The Group Leader shall do the following:
- 1) Reflect the ministry and mission of the church
 - 2) Help enlist group members
 - 3) Coordinate, facilitate, and schedule group meetings
 - 4) Represent the group at Team Leadership meetings
 - 5) Oversee the expenditures of the group to keep them in line with the church budget.
- Group Leaders shall work in consultation with the Business Manager and Team Coordinator, following policies outlined in the Operations Manual.

Section 3: Team Structure

- A. Teams are made up of a Team Coordinator and several groups, each of which has a Group Leader and group members. Team Leadership consists of the Team Coordinator and individual Group Leaders within that team.
- B. The specific job description for each team shall be outlined in the Operations Manual. The following principles apply to all teams:
- 1) Each team shall conduct meetings of all or some of its groups, as necessary, to carry out its functions. Each year it shall develop goals that support the church vision, devise appropriate strategies, and implement plans in accordance with the church budget.
 - 2) No team shall have final authority within itself. Recommendations related to finances, personnel, or major changes in church programs or policies must be brought to the church for discussion and approval. Prior to this presentation, teams shall present their recommendations to the Church Council for consideration and Council approval.
 - 3) A team can form a new group to perform an ongoing task or ministry, so long as it is reviewed and approved by the Church Council.

Section 4: Team Coordinators

- A. Team Coordinators shall be active members as defined by Article 1, Section 5. They shall be enlisted by the Nominating Group and approved by the church. A Team Coordinator may serve one term of three years. A full year must elapse, after serving a three-year term, before a person is eligible to serve another term as a Team Coordinator.
- B. The Team Coordinator shall do the following:
- 1) Ensure that all groups reflect the ministry and mission of the church
 - 2) Monitor progress and coordinate the actions of groups constituting the team
 - 3) Represent those groups at Church Council meetings
 - 4) Assist the Nominating Group and Group Leaders in enlisting group members to carry out the ministries assigned to that team
 - 5) Set the time and place of team meetings, contact groups for agenda items, and conduct team meetings
 - 6) Ensure adherence to budget policies
 - 7) Make certain that job descriptions for groups are formulated and up to date for all groups within the team
 - 8) See that minutes are recorded at all team leadership meetings and provided to the church office

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- 9) Write a proposal and description for any new group and submit it to the Church Council for approval. This proposal shall include the responsibilities of the Group Leader and the responsibilities of the group. Once approved, this group description shall be placed in the Operations Manual.

Section 5. Church Council

- A. Voting members of the Church Council shall include the Pastor, Team Coordinators, Deacon Chair, Trustee Chair, and the Moderator. Full-time ministerial staff may serve in a non-voting, ex-officio capacity. The Business Manager may serve ex-officio for the purpose of recording minutes. The Pastor shall chair the council. If the pastorate is vacant, the Church Council shall elect as chair one of the existing council members.
- B. The Church Council shall carry out the following functions:
 - 1) The Church Council shall review, plan, coordinate, and evaluate the ministries and operations agreed upon by the church, including oversight of long-range vision and planning by the church.
 - 2) The Church Council shall have the authority to appoint a group as needed to work on a specific task approved by the congregation. This group, known as a Task Action Group (TAG), may serve a term of up to one year and does not require approval of the congregation. If the task is not completed after a one-year term, it will be reevaluated by Church Council. TAG Teams have no authority to implement recommendations without the approval of the congregation.
 - 3) When the church is without a Pastor, it shall be the duty of the Church Council to see that that the regular programs of the church continue. During such times, Church Council shall provide general direction for the work of the church.
 - 4) All matters beyond the authority of the Church Council shall be referred to the church. After review by Church Council, recommendations shall generally be brought to the church membership by Team Coordinators.
 - 5) Minutes shall be recorded at all Church Council meetings and maintained in the church office.

Article VII. Church Ordinances

Section 1. Baptism

The church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, as well as any person who comes on statement of faith from a denomination that does not practice baptism by immersion.

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion.
- B. The Pastor, or whoever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism.
- C. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any church service.

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Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly. Members, and visitors who are believers in Jesus Christ, may partake of the Lord's Supper. The Pastor and Deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper.

Article VIII. Church Meetings

Section 1. Regular Services

The church shall meet each week for worship, Bible study, prayer, and spiritual development. In an emergency, service times may be changed or services canceled by the Pastor after consultation with the Deacon Chair. In the absence of a Pastor, the designated Church Council Chair shall make the decision to change service times or cancel services after consultation with the Deacon Chair.

Section 2. Special Services

Any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar with the approval of the Church Council.

Section 3. Regular Business Meetings

The church shall hold regular business meetings every other month to conduct the business of the church. The meeting shall be announced in the church newsletter at least one month in advance. Church Council shall provide its agenda to the church in the Sunday morning bulletin preceding the business meeting.

In the course of normal church business, the Moderator will table any motion from the floor which changes policy and procedure until the next regular business meeting. The motion shall be referred to Church Council for consideration.

Section 4. Special Business Meetings

The church may conduct special business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one-week notice must be given for the Special Business Meeting unless extreme urgency makes such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, date, time, and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all active members have opportunity to know of the meeting. No business shall be transacted at such a meeting other than that for which the meeting has been specifically called.

Section 5. Elections

Elections shall be held annually and at such times as vacancies may require. The term of office for church leaders, team coordinators, and group members shall be concurrent with the calendar year. The term of office for church program organizations, including Sunday School, shall be concurrent with the school year.

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Section 6. Decisions

The following principles determine the validity of decisions reached in regular and special business meetings:

- A. **Quorum**: A quorum consists of those active members who attend regular or special business meetings that have been properly announced.
- B. **Voting**: Approval of a motion requires a simple majority vote by active members who attend regular or special business meetings, unless a larger majority is specifically required by the church Constitution and/or Bylaws.

Section 7. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church. The Moderator may appoint a parliamentarian in an advisory capacity if needed.

Article IX. Church Finances

Section 1. Budget

The Stewardship and Finance Group, in consultation with the Team Coordinators, shall annually prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by item the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses.

Membership in this church involves a financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. There shall be an annual opportunity provided to secure worthy commitments of financial support from church members. Offering envelopes will be provided for all active members.

Section 2. Accounting Procedures

Accurate records of all funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the Church Treasurer and Business Manager and be properly recorded on the books of the church.

Ensuring that the church uses a system of accounting that adequately provides for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Stewardship and Finance Group.

Section 3. Fiscal Year

The church fiscal year shall be concurrent with the calendar year.

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**Article X.
Church Operations Manual**

The West Side Baptist Church Operations Manual shall include church policies and procedures and charts depicting lines of responsibility in the operations of the church. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available for use by any member of the church. The Business Manager shall maintain the manual. The Church Council shall review the manual at least once every five years, with authority to recommend changes. In addition, any church member or church organization may propose changes to the manual to the Church Council.

Policies and procedures may be added, revised, or deleted by 1) recommendation of the church leader or group to whose area of responsibility the procedures relate, 2) approval by the Church Council, and 3) approval by the Church, if the Church Council deems such approval necessary.

**Article XI.
Amendments**

Changes to the constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided that each amendment has been presented in writing at a previous regular or special business meeting and that a copy of the proposed amendment has been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting.

An announcement of proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be made on at least four consecutive Sundays prior to church action. Approval of amendments to the Constitution requires a three-fourths vote of the active members present and voting at a regular or special business meeting of the church.

An announcement of proposed amendments to the Bylaws shall be made on at least two consecutive Sundays prior to church action. Approval of amendments to the Bylaws requires a two-thirds vote of the active members present and voting at a regular or special business meeting of the church.