

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF OAK STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Graham, Texas

THE CONSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION

We, the followers of Jesus Christ who make up the part of God's family and Christ's body known as Oak Street Baptist Church, adopt this formal document which reflects the heart, spirit, and intent of our body; establishes the structure, functions, and purposes we embrace; and sets forth the guidelines and parameters by which we will seek to accomplish our stated mission and purpose.

I. Name and Location

This family of believers in Jesus Christ will be known as Oak Street Baptist Church, Inc., located at the intersection of First Street and Oak Street in Graham, Texas.

II. Vision

Our vision, taken from Isaiah 61:1-3 and Luke 4:17-21, is to be a church of PROCLAMATION of the good news of Jesus Christ, RESTORATION of lives and hope, TRANSFORMATION from brokenness to wholeness, and CELEBRATION through Christ-honoring praise and worship.

III. Purpose and Mission

Our purpose, individually and corporately, is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever through a relationship characterized by love, obedience, and faith. We desire to know Him intimately and make Him known to the world. Our goals are to fulfill the Great Commandments—to love God and people (Mark 12: 30-31), and the Great Commission—to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8), beginning where we live. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we seek to accomplish these goals through evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, worship, prayer, missions, and Christian education.

IV. Statement of Faith

Our foundational beliefs include but are not limited to:

A. The Bible is the infallible and inspired Word of God. God is its author and it is truth without any mixture of error. Its intended purpose is to reveal God's plan of redemption and salvation for mankind through His Son, Jesus Christ.

B. God is the Supreme Creator, Redeemer, and Ruler of the universe. He is the eternal, triune God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

C. Jesus Christ, God’s Son and God the Son, fully God and fully man, was born of a virgin, lived a perfect, sinless life, died on a cross for the sins of mankind, rose from the dead on the third day, and ascended to heaven where He lives to make intercession for His bride, the Church. Salvation for every human being is found only in trusting the person of Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. One day, Christ will return for all who belong to Him.

D. The Holy Spirit is the invisible presence of God who convicts of sin and calls people to Christ. He lives in every true believer and gives power to live the victorious Christian life.

E. The Church includes all the redeemed of all ages. The local church is an autonomous, self-governing body of believers—operating under the lordship of Christ through democratic processes. The pastor, elders, ministry staff, deacons, committees, ministry teams, and lay leaders are selected by the church body to lead the church.

F. Salvation is the grace-filled work of God to completely save a human being for Himself. It involves turning from sin to God and faith in Christ. Salvation includes the process of conversion, sanctification, and glorification.

G. Oak Street Baptist Church agrees with the doctrinal statements in The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, but considers the Bible as the ultimate document of faith and practice.

V. Ordinances

The church has two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

VI. Relationships and Affiliations

Jesus Christ is the head of our church. We have made a commitment of our lives to follow Him and to be Christ-like in our relationships with others. We are committed to healthy, loving relationships in the body. When conflicts or differences occur, we will seek reconciliation through biblical principles and conduct, and a Christ-like spirit.

We are autonomous, but not independent. We value the biblical principle of cooperation with other Christians, churches, para-church organizations, associations, and conventions, as long as it advances and strengthens the Kingdom of God and does not compromise our integrity, values, or mission. Insofar as possible, this church body cooperates with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist Convention.

VII. Church Covenant

God has called His people to covenant—first with Himself and then with one another. As members of the body of Christ at Oak Street Baptist Church, we covenant to:

- Grow in Christ-likeness through prayer, the Word of God, and involvement in ministry to others.
- Support the mission and ministries of Oak Street Baptist Church through faithful giving and the use of spiritual gifts and talents.
- Share our faith in Christ through word and deed with those who are unsaved and/or unchurched.
- Build relationships of love and trust with one another.
- Seek to live lives that please, honor, and glorify God.
- Reproduce Great Commandment and Great Commission Christians.

BYLAWS OF OAK STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Membership

Section 1. General

Our local church is composed of baptized believers who have been received into the fellowship by the congregation.

Section 2. Candidacy

Any person desiring membership in the church is expected to complete an information/orientation class, either in person or via a media presentation, unless other arrangements have been made with the pastor or ministry staff.

Those desiring membership may offer themselves in any of the following ways:

- As a baptized follower of Jesus Christ.
- On promise of a letter-of-good-standing from another church of like faith.
- By their statement of having been converted and baptized by immersion.
- By proxy, when, for valid reasons, they are unable to present themselves as candidates for membership.

All candidates are to be presented to the church at a public worship service where their intent to join the church will be recognized and welcomed. Their names will then be presented to the church at the following month's family forum for a vote of the body.

Should a member of the church raise a question concerning the candidate's desire for membership, the issue will be referred to the elder leadership for consideration and review. Their recommendation will be brought before the church at a subsequent family forum.

A three-fourths vote of church members present at the church family forum is required for membership in the church.

Section 3. Elections and Voting

Every member of the church is entitled to vote on every issue brought before the church. Prayerful consideration is encouraged and expected before voting.

Absentee voting will be made available for those who cannot attend meetings providing there is suitable cause and need.

Those in the appropriate leadership positions will make the day-to-day decisions concerning ministry and administration. The congregation will vote on the following:

- Annual church budget.
- Building programs.
- Acquiring and selling property.
- Pastor and ministerial staff positions.
- Election of elders and deacons.
- Election of church committees, ministry leaders, and officers.
- Church discipline issues.
- Receiving new members.
- Granting of dismissal and transfer of membership letters.
- Other matters brought to the church by the elders, deacons, ministry staff, committees, or ministry teams.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Membership will be terminated in the following ways:

- Death.
- Transfer to another church.
- Dismissal by action of this church.
- An individual's stated desire to be removed from membership.

The church may choose to periodically purge the roll of inactive members by a procedure approved by the church body.

Section 5. Discipline

The motive and desired end of church discipline is not punishment but redemption and reconciliation motivated by love; therefore the church will follow biblical guidelines (such as Matthew 18:15-18) in seeking to redeem and restore broken relationships.

Should an issue that may require church discipline arise, the following steps will be taken:

- Elders will inquire, counsel, and/or intervene to seek resolution.
- If deemed in the best interest of the church, the elder body will bring a recommendation for exclusion of the member from the church body.
- At a special, called meeting, a recommendation for exclusion will be made. A majority vote by those in attendance is necessary for exclusion.

Restoration of the excluded member may take place upon:

- Evidence of repentance and reformation by that member.
- Request for reinstatement.
- Recommendation for reinstatement by the elder body.
- A three-fourths vote of the church to reinstate membership.

Church Leadership

We believe that Scripture clearly demands high spiritual standards and an exemplary lifestyle for all church leaders. All ordained leadership shall follow the scriptural guidelines found in I Timothy 3:1-13. All church leaders must be members of Oak Street Baptist Church and display the heart of a servant (Philippians 2:5-8).

Following the Biblical pattern of shared team leadership with a separation of responsibilities and functions, Oak Street Baptist Church has elders, deacons, ministry staff, committees, ministry teams, support staff, and other church officers that are called by the church to provide spiritual leadership and ministry. The pastor or his designee shall be considered as an ex-officio member of all committees and ministry teams.

Section 1. Pastor

The pastor is responsible for leading the church to fulfill its vision and purpose. The head of the church is Jesus Christ and the pastor is the under-shepherd of the church. The

pastor's primary responsibilities are prayer and ministry of the Word in order to equip God's people for ministering and building up the body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-12)

The pastor shall serve until he or the church requests termination of the relationship. The pastor may terminate by resignation or by recommendation of the elders and Personnel Committee and a majority vote of the church.

When a vacancy exists or is expected, the church body shall appoint a Pastor Search Committee.

- The Pastor Search Committee's recommendation constitutes a nomination.
- Any member of the body can make recommendations to the Pastor Search Committee.
- The committee shall bring only one nominee at a time before the church for consideration.
- Election shall be by ballot, with a three-fourths vote of those present necessary for approval.
- Results of the vote shall be made available to the candidate for his consideration.

Section 2. Elders

The elders are the church's spiritual leaders (overseers) who exhibit the scriptural qualifications found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-8 and are selected by the congregation. The elder body will consist of the pastor (Ephesians 4:11) and other scripturally qualified men from the congregation.

The responsibilities of the elders are to:

- Oversee the spiritual health and well-being of the church.
- Ensure a balanced and effective approach to ministry.
- Provide leadership that allows the church to fulfill its primary mission while adhering to sound biblical doctrine.
- Facilitate healthy communication within the body of the church.
- Oversee church discipline and conflict resolution.
- Pray for the sick. (James 5:14)
- Ensure adherence to the constitution and bylaws of Oak Street Baptist Church.

Elders will meet regularly to pray together, seek God's will for the church, discuss relevant issues regarding the church, and consider courses of action that will benefit the body at Oak Street Baptist Church and further the Kingdom of God.

Elder Selection Process

Each year in January, the Nominating Committee will compile a list of all adult males who have been members of Oak Street Baptist Church for at least one year. With

guidance from the Holy Spirit and considering Scriptural qualifications, each member of the congregation may nominate elder candidates from the Nominating Committee's list. The Nominating Committee will then prepare a list of nominees from that group of candidates. The pastor and the elders will interview the nominees. (The pastor, deacon executive body, and ministerial staff will interview the nominees the first year that elders are selected.) Those who are qualified and agree to serve will be presented to the church for election. A three-fourths vote will be required for approval of each nominee. Elders will be ordained after one year of faithful and satisfactory service. Elders will serve rotating terms of five years with at least one year between terms of service. There will be a minimum of five and a maximum of seven elders, including the pastor.

Section 3. Deacons

The deacons are the church ministry leaders who model servanthood, wisdom, responsibility, and Christ-like character. (Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13.)

The responsibilities of the deacons are to:

- Oversee and participate in the benevolent and practical ministries of the church.
- Work alongside the elders, church staff, and ministry teams to fulfill the church's purpose and mission.
- Encourage practical ministry in the body.
- Assist church members in finding and fulfilling their God-given ministry.

The deacons shall meet on a regular basis for prayer, discerning the needs of the body, and communicating with the elders and ministerial staff to ensure unity within the fellowship.

Deacon Selection Process

The process for selecting the deacons will be the same as for selecting the elders with the exception that the deacon nominees will be interviewed by the pastor and the executive body of deacons (chairman, vice chairman, secretary). Deacons will serve rotating terms of three years with at least one year between terms of service. Ordination of deacons will follow one year of faithful and satisfactory service.

Section 4. Ministerial Staff

The church shall call or employ staff members to work with the pastor and the lay leadership in fulfilling the church's vision, purpose and mission. The search for ministerial staff (a new position or vacancy) will be conducted by a coordinated effort of the elders and Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee shall present each candidate to the church body. Election will be by ballot. A three-fourths vote of members present is necessary for approval. Ministerial staff members may terminate by resignation or by recommendation of the elders and Personnel Committee and a majority

vote of the church. The Personnel Committee will prepare a job description for each ministerial staff position.

Section 5. Support Staff

The Personnel Committee, in conjunction with the ministerial staff, shall employ all support staff employees such as secretaries, child-care coordinators, custodians, etc. The Personnel Committee will provide a job description for each position. Support staff may terminate by resignation or by action of the Personnel Committee.

Section 6. Moderator

The pastor will serve as moderator at church family forums. In his absence, an elder, a member of the ministerial staff, or the chairman of the deacons will serve as moderator.

Section 7. Church Clerk

The church clerk is nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected annually by the church body. It is the duty of the clerk to attend, or be represented at, all family forums and to record all action as minutes. The clerk will make these minutes available prior to the next family forum. The minutes shall include all those presented for membership and those baptized. The clerk is to issue letters of dismissal as voted by the church, maintain an accurate register of members, including dates of admission and termination of membership, and work in cooperation with the church secretary in maintaining all other official reports, such as baptismal dates. The clerk shall also coordinate with the church secretary to ensure data is retrievable and that “hard copies” of important data are kept in a secure place.

Section 8. Treasurer

The church treasurer shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected annually by the church. The treasurer will also serve as a member of the Finance Committee and have signature authority on all accounts. The duties of the treasurer will include overseeing the preparation of financial statements; initiating the annual review of financial records; supervising investments, accounts payable, payroll, general ledger and other accounting procedures, tax returns, and contribution statements according to the Internal Revenue Service guidelines; working with the designated staff member and supervising the church bookkeeper.

Section 9. Trustees

There will be three trustees, nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. The trustees shall hold church property in trust and affix their signatures to legal documents that are required by action of the church body—including, but not limited to the purchase, sale, mortgage, or rental of real property. Where only one signature is required on a document, a trustee selected by the group will affix his signature to the document. The trustees will have no power to purchase, sell, mortgage, or rent property without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action. The trustees will serve three-year rotating terms, with one new trustee being elected each year.

Committees and Ministry Teams

Section 1. Committees

There shall be three standing committees: the Personnel Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Nominating Committee. These committees have the responsibility and the authority to oversee their areas of administration of the church. The committee members will be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. Committee members and the designated staff member assigned to that committee will work together to accomplish the vision and ministry of the church. They will share reports of their activities with the church body as needed. Recommendations for a church vote in each committee's area of responsibility should come from that committee. No person may serve on more than one standing committee at any time. No member may succeed himself or herself to election to the same committee unless one full year has elapsed since his/her last tenure.

A. Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee guides the church in matters related to employed personnel. The committee will be comprised of an ex-officio staff member and five church members serving for three years on a rotating system.

The responsibilities and duties of the Personnel Committee are to:

- Coordinate hiring of staff.
- Recommend number and organization of staff.
- Define job descriptions and titles, which are to be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.
- Develop and maintain a personnel policies and procedures manual for approval by the church body. A copy will be given to each employee of the church.
- Review and recommend compensation for church employees.
- Designate holidays and benefits.
- Review and approve policies, compensation, and employment procedures for all ministries of the church that have paid personnel.
- Keep written minutes of each meeting.

B. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee guides the church in development, approval, and administration of all financial matters of the church, including developing an annual budget. The committee consists of the Church Treasurer, an ex-officio staff member, and five church members serving for three years on a rotating system.

The responsibilities and duties of the Finance Committee are to:

- Develop and implement procedures to safeguard the funds of the church.
- Review budget recommendations from each ministry.
- Develop, submit, and administer the annual budget.
- Consider and approve amendments to the budget.
- Approve the budget of any ministry that has an operating fund separate from the church budget under the umbrella of the church such as Open Door Christian School and Mother's Day Out.
- Cooperate with an annual review of the financial records initiated by the Treasurer.
- Keep written minutes of each meeting.

Expenditures

All expenditures are subject to review; therefore funds will remain in a church bank account until used. Individual ministries will not have separate bank accounts unless approved by the finance committee. The church body must approve any expenditure made beyond what is budgeted annually for each line item.

The fiscal year of the church will coincide with the calendar year.

Monies given for special offerings, designated areas, or particular ministries will be used for those specific purposes. If the specified need or ministry no longer exists, after a reasonable period of time those monies may be made available for other use.

C. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions that are filled by volunteers. The committee will consist of an ex-officio staff member and five church members serving three year rotating terms. The responsibilities of the committee are to:

- Identify prospective members for service.
- Contact prospective nominees and determine willingness to serve.
- Present the nominations to the church body for approval.

Substitutions and additions to the leadership may be put into effect as necessary during the church year.

D. Special Committees

Short-term committees may be established for special projects or purposes. The committee members will be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church.

Section 2. Ministry Teams

Ministry teams are charged with the day-to-day, hands-on activities of the church related to ministry needs. Since ministry needs are ever changing, the types of ministry teams needed within the church body will also vary and are not enumerated here. The deacons are charged to oversee and participate in the benevolent and practical needs of the church; therefore their duties will overlap those of ministry teams in many areas. Deacons and elected ministry team leaders will cooperate together to ensure that the ministry needs of the congregation and community are addressed.

Program Organizations

Section 1. General

The congregation shall approve and supervise all church programs.

A. Sunday School

Under the leadership of the Sunday School Director, there shall be a program of Bible study conducted that encourages, enhances, and enables understanding of God's Word. The goals of this Bible study program are to teach biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ, and incorporate believers into church fellowship.

B. Lifetime Groups

Lifetime groups are an extension of the Bible study groups. They meet for the purposes of ministry, prayer, and development of personal relationships.

C. Discipleship

Discipleship is a multi-faceted process of following Christ's command in Matthew 28:19-20 to "Go and make disciples...". Discipleship is accomplished by teaching sound doctrine and modeling right living through:

- One-on-one new believer training.
- Bible study groups through Sunday school.
- Bible studies and group studies on relevant topics that meet the needs of individuals and families.

D. Church Music

Church music will be under the supervision of the Worship Minister. Its goal is to teach and lead the body to worship fully by encouraging participants to use their talents and abilities to glorify God through music.

E. Mother's Day Out

Mother's Day Out is a ministry of Oak Street Baptist Church. It is designed to minister to families with young children by showing the love of Jesus Christ by providing a caring and enriching environment for young children. It is governed by a church-elected board and administered by a director employed by Mother's Day Out. The board will consist of an ex-officio staff member, four church members serving three-year rotating terms, and the director.

F. Open Door Christian School

Open Door Christian School is a ministry of Oak Street Baptist Church. It is governed by a church-elected board of directors and administered by a church-approved principal. The board will consist of seven members serving three-year rotating terms with at least five board members being members of the church and one member being from the church ministerial staff. Open Door Christian School's purpose is to bring students into a right relationship with God, build godly character, and equip them to fulfill God's purpose for their lives. Fiscal year of the school shall be from August 1 to July 31 for accounting purposes.

G. Missions

Missions are at the heart of God's plan for His church (Acts 1:8). To facilitate obedience to God's mandate of taking Christ to the world, our church will emphasize, teach, promote, pray, give, plant churches, and participate in mission endeavors at home and around the world. Beginning in childhood (Mission Friends, GA's, RA's) and continuing through adulthood, each member will be encouraged to utilize their life resources to fulfill God's Great Commission—personally and in cooperation with others. Our missions goal is to be an equipping and sending body—that the world may know Christ.

Ordinances

Section 1. Baptism

Baptism is a public acknowledgment by a person that they have made a commitment of their life to Jesus Christ. It is a picture of what Christ has done for them and the work of the Holy Spirit in them at conversion.

- Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- Ministry staff, elders, deacons, or others authorized by church leadership shall perform baptism.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of worship wherein members of the Body of Christ, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, commemorate the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ and His second coming.

The Lord's Supper shall be observed on a regular basis, as determined by the church ministerial staff, and shall be done in such a manner that it does not become routine and meaningless, always bringing honor to our Lord.

The pastor, elders, and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper, with the deacons being responsible for physical preparation of the elements.

Licensing and Ordination

Desiring to identify, train, equip, and send those "called out" to proclaim the gospel of Christ through preaching, music, education, or other avenues, we will license and/or ordain those individuals who have, to the best of the body's understanding, been "set apart" by God for vocational ministry.

Section 1. Licensing

Licensing of an individual to the gospel ministry is a confirmation by the church that the individual is doctrinally sound, sufficiently trained, and evidences a clear call of God on his life to vocational ministry. Licensing will follow a recommendation by the elders and a three-fourths vote of the church body.

Section 2. Ordination

The leadership of the church will schedule ordination of an individual to the gospel ministry after that person has received a call and has accepted a vocational ministry position in a church. This will follow a recommendation by the elders and a three-fourths vote of the church body.

Ordination of elders and deacons who serve our fellowship will follow one year of faithful service in their respective ministry positions. Ordained elders and deacons will lead the ordination service.

Church Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly for corporate worship of Almighty God. These meetings will be open to all and shall be conducted under the leadership of the ministerial staff.

Section 2. Special Services

Because seasons of outreach, revival, renewal, prayer, and other spiritual exercises are essential for healthy church body life, special events for such will be placed on the church calendar as prompted by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Section 3. Church Family Forum

Scheduled family forums shall be held monthly on the third Sunday of the month.

Specially called family forums may be held to consider special matters of a significant nature. A one-week notice of the subject, date, and time must be given for the specially called family forum.

Section 4. Quorum

The quorum consists of church members who attend the family forum, provided it is a regular meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 5. Parliamentary Procedure

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the general guideline for family forums.

Amendments

The provisions of this document supersede previous constitutions and bylaws and take precedence over any conflicting documents or decisions. Changes in this Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any scheduled family forum of the church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments to the Constitution shall pass by a two-thirds vote. Amendments to the Bylaws require a majority vote.

Church Legal Structure & Dissolution

Section 1. Legal Structure

This body was incorporated in the State of Texas as a Domestic Nonprofit Corporation (filing number 39167401) under the name OAK STREET BAPTIST CHURCH OF GRAHAM, TEXAS, INC. We are an active entity, organized and operated primarily for the purposes of engaging in religious worship and promoting the spiritual development and well being of individuals. We operate in a manner that is in compliance with regulations regarding non-profit organizations registered under Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as amended. These regulations include these rules:

- Our net earnings may not inure to any private shareholder or individual.
- We must not provide a substantial benefit to private interests.
- We must not devote a substantial part of our activities to attempting to influence legislation.
- We must not participate in, or intervene in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.
- No part of our purposes or activities may be illegal or violate fundamental public policy.

Section 2. Dissolution

Dissolution of this body shall be by a three-fourths vote of the membership present at a family forum.

Section 3. Transfer of Assets

On discontinuance of this church by dissolution or otherwise, the assets will be transferred to a charitable, educational, religious, or other similar organization that is qualified as a charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code.

Notes:

- (1) On April 18th, 2007, the OSBC body approved, on second reading, this motion:

The elder body recommends that the Church Meetings topic, Section 3 of the Oak Street Baptist Church By-Laws, be changed in the following manner:

The present language is:

Section 3. Church Family Forum
Scheduled family forums shall be held monthly on the third Wednesday of the month.

Proposed language:

Section 3. Church Family Forum
Scheduled family forums shall be held monthly on the third Sunday of the month.

This change has been reflected in the appropriate section (above).