

DEL CERRO

—BAPTIST CHURCH—

Constitution and Bylaws

Adopted April 30, 2023

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Section I

Constitution

Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. In all matters, the Bible is the final authority in governing the affairs of The Church.

Article I Name

First Baptist Church of Del Cerro, doing business as Del Cerro Baptist Church, a corporation, was established on March 13, 1959, and is located at 5512 Pennsylvania Lane, La Mesa, CA, hereinafter referred to as "The Church".

Article II Purpose

In union with Christ, we exist to glorify God by living New Creation lives and making disciples.

Article III Statement of Faith

The Church affirms the Bible as the inerrant and inspired Word of God and as the only basis for our beliefs and practices. The Church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of *The Baptist Faith and Message*, as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention of 2000. A copy is available at <https://www.dcbc.org/what-we-believe>.

Article IV Relationships

The Church is a self-governing body and therefore maintains the right to direct its own affairs independent of any denominational control, recognizing however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in carrying out home and foreign missions. The Church affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention, the California Southern Baptist Convention, and the San Diego Southern Baptist Association.

Article V Dedication of Assets

The properties and assets of The Church are irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes. No part of the net earnings, properties, or assets of The Church, on

dissolution or otherwise, shall benefit any private persons or individual, or any member of The Church.

In the case of dissolution, the net assets of The Church, after payment or provision for payment of all debts and liabilities, shall be distributed to the San Diego Southern Baptist Association, Inc, California Baptist University in Riverside, CA, and Gateway Seminary in Ontario, CA.

Article VI Amendments

Amendments to the Constitution may be adopted if the following guidelines are met:

1. The amendment shall first be offered for consideration in writing at a members' meeting.
2. The amendment cannot be voted on at the same meeting it was first introduced. Before a vote, the congregation must have at least 2 weeks to consider the amendment. The meeting in which the vote is to take place must be announced from the pulpit at church services at least two successive Sundays prior to such vote.
3. Amendments to the Constitution must be approved by two-thirds (66%) majority of voting church members present. The Constitution as amended and adopted shall supersede and nullify any other previously adopted Constitution. All amendments are effective immediately following adoption by The Church membership.
4. The Church Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining the record of any amendments to the Constitution.

Article VII Authority of Scripture

If any part of this Constitution contradicts the Scriptures, the Scriptures supersede the Constitution.

Article VIII Approval of the Constitution

Date of Approval, by vote of The Church

Signature of Church Clerk:

Signed Amendments will be filed in the Church office.

Section II By-Laws

Article I Membership

A. Purpose: Under Christ this congregation is governed by born again followers of Christ who are active members of The Church.

B. Membership Requirements and Procedure

The membership of The Church shall consist of persons who:

1. Have received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and are living a life consistent with their confession of faith.
2. Have been baptized by immersion according to the Scriptures.
3. Have completed the New Members Class (or equivalent) and affirmed the Statement of Faith and Membership Covenant of The Church.
4. Have been through an elder's interview and are recommended to the Church by the elders within six months of completing the New Member's Class.
5. Have been welcomed into membership by a simple majority vote of the members of The Church.

C. Duties and Privileges of Membership

1. It is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings and vote on the following matters:
 - a. Church officers (including pastors)
 - b. Members
 - c. Statement of faith
 - d. Governing documents
 - e. Annual budget
 - f. Purchasing, selling, encumbering, or transferring real property
 - g. Incurring debt not included in the annual budget
 - h. Establishing a new church plant or separate church campus
 - i. Affiliations of The Church with other conventions, denominations, associations, and groups.
 - j. Election of church messengers to denominational conventions
 - k. Dissolution of the church

All other matters are under the purview of The Church's elders and deacons.

2. Members will adhere to The Church's membership covenant as a condition of continuing membership.
(see <https://www.csmedia1.com/dcbc.org/dcbc-covenant-2019.pdf>)
3. Though the elders are responsible for the spiritual leadership of the church, the membership of the Church has the responsibility and authority to ensure that the elders are leading the church in submission to Christ and His rule. Members have the responsibility under God to bring issues of concern directly to the members in a membership meeting.

D. Removal from Membership

Removal from membership will take place under any of the following circumstances:

1. Death
2. Transferring membership to another church
3. By written request to the Church Clerk
4. By action of The Church according to Article 1 "Membership", Section E "Inactive Membership" of The Church By-Laws
5. By action of The Church according to Article 1 "Membership", Section F "Discipline and Restoration" of The Church By-Laws

E. Inactive Membership

1. Members who have moved outside of San Diego County will become inactive members. These persons will be automatically removed from membership after six (6) months. (Exceptions include students and those serving or those working out-of-area.)
2. Members who have not moved but who have not been actively participating in the life of The Church for 6 months or more, *despite attempts of The Church (membership and/or elders) to reach out to them*, shall be moved to "inactive member" status and will not be eligible to vote in member's meetings.
3. The Church will continue to actively reach out to inactive members. If, after one year on the inactive list, a member continues to neglect the gathered church, they will be subject to the disciplinary process outlined in Article I "Membership", Section F "Discipline and Restoration" of The Church By-Laws.
4. Restoration to "active member" status will involve:
 - a. once again actively participating in the life of the Church for at least six months.
 - b. a membership interview with the elders.
 - c. a simple majority affirmation of The Church at a members' meeting.

F. Discipline and Restoration

1. Definition

Formative discipline is the ongoing formation of a believer in accordance with God's Word and is inherent in the preaching, teaching, and exercise of other ministries in The Church.

Corrective discipline is the process of confronting a member regarding unrepentant sin.

2. Purpose

When formative discipline fails due to sin, corrective discipline is then necessary. The purpose of corrective discipline should be:

- a. For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Heb. 12:1-11; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:1).
- b. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (1 Cor. 5:11; 1 Tim. 5:20; Heb. 10:24-25).
- c. For the purity of The Church as a whole (1 Cor. 5:6-7; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 21:2).
- d. For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Matt. 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14); and
- e. Most importantly, for the glory of God by striving to reflect His holy character as a church body (Deut. 5:11; John 15:8; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 2:12).

3. Process

- a. Any member consistently neglectful of his or her Christian duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and/or who actively opposes the welfare of The Church, shall be subject to the private admonition of the elders and Church members according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17. Public church discipline should ordinarily only be considered after multiple attempts at private admonition have failed.
- b. It is desirable in the case of *public* sin that a confession be made before The Church in a specially called meeting, so that The Church can freely extend forgiveness. Such public confession is especially necessary in the case of elders and deacons (1 Tim. 5:19-20, Gal. 2:11-14).
- c. In the case of ongoing, unrepentant sin, an individual may be removed from membership with a vote of a simple majority of the members present at any regular or a special meeting of the members.
- d. Any member who has been removed may be restored (2 Corinthians 2:6-8) after:
 - (i) confession of their sin before the membership,
 - (ii) showing satisfactory evidence of repentance,
 - (iii) a membership interview with the elders,
 - (iv) recommendation of the elders, and
 - (v) a simple majority vote of the members in attendance at any congregational meeting.

Article II Church Meetings

A. Worship Gatherings

1. Worship services shall be conducted each Sunday for the purpose of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through the ministry of the Word in preaching, singing, giving, discipleship, and fellowship.
2. Additional services may be held whenever The Church determines.

B. Members' Meetings

1. Regular members' meetings shall normally be held quarterly.
2. A special meeting may be called by the elders or deacons to consider special matters of significant nature. Notice of the subject, date, time and location for the special meeting must be given at least two (2) weeks in advance at a regularly scheduled church service.
3. Parliamentary Rules - Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all regular or special meetings of The Church.
4. Voting
 - a. Voting will be restricted to members 18 years of age and older.
 - b. Every active member of The Church is entitled to one vote.
 - c. Absentee voting is not permitted unless otherwise stipulated.
 - d. Quorum consists of 33% of all eligible voting members.
 - e. Affirmative approvals must be no less than the thresholds of the quorum as noted below:

Item of vote	Percentage	By-Laws provision
Pastoral Staff	90%	III.A.6.vi and III.A.7
Elder Appointment	90%	III.A.8.a. ii
Elder Removal	75%	III.A.9
Deacon Appointment	75%	III.B.3.c
Deacon Removal	66%	III.B.6.c
Non-pastoral staff	66%	III.A.4. b
Administrative Positions	75%	IV.C.1
Admin Positions Removal	66%	IV.C.1
General matters	50.01%	
Amendments	66%	

Article III Biblical Officers

A. Elders

1. Purpose

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall provide broad oversight to the ministries of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17; Tit.1:5-9; Jas. 5:14; and 1 Pet. 5:1-4, the elders shall seek the mind of Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as they undertake the work of shepherding God's flock. The elders shall teach and exhort, refute those who contradict the truth, pray for the sick, care for the members, and devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

2. Qualifications

The elders shall be comprised of no fewer than three men who satisfy the qualifications of the office of "overseer" set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and "elder" set forth in Tit. 1:6-9. Only men may serve as elders in accordance with 1 Tim. 2:12; 3:2 and *The Baptist Faith and Message* (2000). No elder shall hold the office of deacon or treasurer during his tenure as elder, unless the Church deems it necessary.

3. Responsibilities

The elders shall take particular responsibility to:

- a. shepherd the souls of the members of the church
- b. oversee worship services
- c. administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper
- d. equip the membership for the work of ministry
- e. encourage, teach, and defend sound doctrine
- f. admonish and correct error
- g. oversee the process of church discipline
- h. coordinate and promote the ministries of the church
- i. mobilize the church for evangelism and world missions
- j. examine and instruct prospective members
- k. examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions
- l. oversee the work of the deacons and appointed committees
- m. ensure that all who minister the word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share the Church's fundamental convictions
- n. to annually review pastoral staff duties and performance
- o. to consider and attend to the welfare of the staff elders and their families
- p. to serve on the Leadership Council (see Article V)

4. Relationship to Staff

- a. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of staff members.
- b. The outworking of this responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, may be delegated to a deacon(s) or staff member(s).

5. Oversight

a. New Staff Positions

In proposing new paid staff positions, the elders shall coordinate with the deacons of staff relations and finance and then present a job description for each position to the membership for approval. A 2/3 majority of the membership is required for approval of new positions.

b. Procedures for Hiring Paid Staff

- i. Pastoral - If staff to be hired are pastoral (i.e., they will serve as elders), the elders shall present a candidate to the membership for approval. Upon a 90% affirmative vote of The Church membership present at a members meeting, the elders shall extend a call to the approved candidate.
- ii. Non-Pastoral – Once the position is approved by the congregation, non-pastoral staff may be hired by the elders without a congregational vote. (e.g., custodial, office staff, etc.)

6. Procedures for removing non-pastoral staff

- a. Non-pastoral staff shall serve until the relationship is terminated by their request providing at least two-weeks-notice is given.
- b. When it is necessary to dismiss non-pastoral staff, the elders shall seek counsel with the staff-relations deacon. The elders shall consult with the deacon(s) of finance regarding a severance package, if necessary. Final decisions will rest with the elders.

B. Senior Pastor

- 1. The Senior Pastor shall perform the duties of an elder as described above (Art. III.A.3). He shall be recognized by The Church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching the word of God. The senior pastor has the unique responsibility of leadership among the elders as well as a particular devotion to shepherding the members.
 - a. Procedures for Selection
 - i. When a Senior Pastor vacancy occurs, the elders shall call a special members' meeting within two weeks of a vacancy in order to begin assembling a Pastor Search Committee to assist them in the search process.

- ii. The Pastor Search Committee consists of seven members (two elders and five additional non-elder members elected by the church). Staff elders desiring to be considered for the vacancy shall recuse themselves from the Pastor Search Committee (but will continue to serve as elders for all other matters). In the event there is an interim pastor, he shall not be eligible to apply for the Senior Pastor position.
 - iii. Written nominations for Pastor Search Committee members will be taken at this members' meeting. The elders will announce two elders to serve on the committee prior to the meeting. Regarding non-elder nominees, each voting member shall write-in five qualified, non-elder nominees. Non-elder nominees must be members in good standing (Art. I.C.2) who are at least 21 years of age. The Church Clerk and Treasurer shall tabulate written nominations.
 - iv. The elders shall contact those non-elder individuals receiving the most nominations to confirm their eligibility and desire to serve. A list of the top ten non-elder nominations will then be presented to The Church. An additional members' meeting will be held two weeks later to elect the five non-elder members who will join the designated two elders in the search process. Family members may not serve on the Pastor Search Committee together.
 - v. The recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee will constitute a nomination to The Church membership. Only one candidate at a time shall be considered by The Church. The Church shall be given the opportunity to assess the qualifications and preaching gifts of the man nominated before a special members' meeting where the membership will vote by secret ballot on the Pastor Search Committee's nomination.
 - vi. Ballots shall be tabulated by three persons, the Church Clerk and Treasurer and an additional church member. An affirmative vote of 90% of ballots counted shall be necessary to extend a call. Absentee ballots may be requested from the church office during regular business hours and must be received at the church office no later than noon on the business day prior to the election. In the event a candidate does not receive 90% of the vote cast, the Pastor Search Committee will review other candidates. The candidate who did not receive the required affirmative votes shall not be reconsidered.
2. In compliance with the California Corporate Code for Nonprofit Religious Corporations, the Senior Pastor will serve as Chief Executive Officer.

C. Staff Pastors

At various times in the life of the church, some pastoral responsibilities will require The Church to hire additional pastoral staff. These staff can be hired to meet various needs as decided by the elders. The qualifications and hiring process is listed above in Art. III.A.2 and Art. III.A.4b and c. The responsibilities of these positions will be defined by their Church approved job descriptions as well as the general responsibilities of elders.

D. Lay Elders

1. Procedures for selection

- a. Training and nomination: In accordance with 2 Timothy 2:1-2, it is the responsibility of the elders of The Church to be constantly discipling men towards pastoral ministry. As such, the elders also have the responsibility of nominating men to serve as elders. Nominations for lay elder positions shall be made by the elders to the congregation at a members' meeting.
- b. Appointment: The Church shall consider each of the elders' recommendations and only recognize men who are gifted, qualified, and willing to serve in this calling. A 90% majority affirmative vote of the church members is necessary for congregational appointment to the office of elder.
- c. Commissioning: Approved men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and publicly commissioned as elders (Ephesians 4:11-14).

2. Term limits

- a. Lay elder (unpaid elders) terms are three years.
- b. Upon completion of a term, the elder may, by mutual agreement, be nominated for a second term.
- c. After a lay elder has served two consecutive three-year terms, he shall not be eligible for reelection as an elder for at least one year.

3. Removal from Office

- a. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal.
- b. Any dismissal shall be in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matt. 18:15-17 and 1 Tim. 5:17-21.
- c. Any two members with Biblical reasons to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders first, and if need be, only afterwards, to the congregation.
- d. Any elder/pastor may be dismissed by a three-fourths vote of the members at any formally called members' meeting of the church.

E. Deacons/Deaconesses

1. **Purpose:** Deacons/deaconesses are appointed to help meet the various physical ministry needs within The Church. Individual deacons/deaconesses shall be given responsibility over specified ministries recommended by the elders and affirmed by the congregation. This is known as the “task-specific” model for deacons/deaconesses.
2. **Qualifications**
 - a. Deacons/deaconesses shall be church members for at least six months and meet the Biblical qualifications outlined in I Timothy 3:8-13.
3. **Procedures for Selection**
 - a. The number of deacons/deaconesses needed shall be determined by the practical ministry needs within The Church and the calling and qualifications of the members of The Church.
 - b. Call to serve: When a deacon/deaconess vacancy occurs, the congregation may submit recommendations to the elders. The elders will interview and carefully examine suitable candidates and put forth a nomination to the membership of The Church.
 - c. A 75% majority vote is necessary for congregational appointment to the office of deacon/deaconess. Deacons/deaconesses will remain accountable to the elders and congregation throughout their term of service.
4. **Responsibilities**
 - a. Individually appointed deacons/deaconesses will be responsible for ministry areas approved by the membership of The Church (e.g., finance ministry, greeting, properties, staff relations, etc.)
 - b. Each deacon/deaconess, under the oversight of the elders, is encouraged to assemble and train volunteers to help in their area of service. Ministry team volunteers must be church members in good standing.
 - c. Will serve on the Leadership Council (see Article V).
5. **Term of Service**
 - a. Deacons/deaconesses shall serve a term of two years at which point they will be eligible for re-election during a members’ meeting.
 - b. After three consecutive, two-year terms, a deacon/deaconess will not be eligible for re-appointment as a deacon/deaconess for at least one year.
6. **Removal from Office**
 - a. Deacons/deaconesses may remove themselves from office at any time, for any reason by issuing a letter of resignation to the elders.

- b. The Church may remove a deacon/deaconess from office in the event that:
 - i. the individual has repeatedly failed to carry out his/her responsibilities,
 - ii. the individual becomes scripturally disqualified as a deacon/deaconess, or
 - iii. the specific ministry for which the deacon/deaconess was responsible is no longer an area of need for The Church.
- c. Any deacon/deaconess may be dismissed by a 66% majority vote of the members at any formally called members' meeting of The Church.

Article IV Administrative Positions

A. Administrative Positions

1. Church Clerk

- a. Will record minutes at all membership meetings, maintain accurate membership rolls, generate reports as needed, and ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this Constitution and By-Laws are available to any member upon request.
- b. In compliance with the California Corporate Code for Nonprofit Religious Corporations, the Church Clerk will also serve as Secretary for the Corporation.

2. Treasurer

- a. Shall ensure that all funds of the church are properly secured in the appropriate financial institutions.
- b. The Treasurer will be responsible for counting and depositing tithes, offerings, and all other funds The Church receives, keeping a record of donor giving and signing checks. The Treasurer will ensure that a team of qualified counters is assembled to assist with these responsibilities.
- c. The Treasurer shall ensure that accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately managed.
- d. The Treasurer shall submit financial reports to the elders and congregation as scheduled and/or when requested.
- e. The Treasurer shall be under the oversight of the elders.
- f. In compliance with the California Corporate Code for Nonprofit Religious Corporations, the Treasurer will also serve as Treasurer for the Corporation.

B. Qualifications

1. The Church Clerk and Treasurer shall be voting members of The Church, at least 25 years of age, and whose Christian testimony is evident. They should be supporters of all ministries of the Church and good stewards of their time, talents, and income.
2. The Deacon of Finance may serve as Treasurer. Paid staff are excluded from serving as Treasurer.

C. Election & Term of Office

1. The Church Clerk and Treasurer will be nominated by the elders and elected by the members of The Church with an affirmative 75% vote in the fall quarterly members' meeting and will officially take office in

January. Removal from office should be decided by a greater than 66% vote of The Church.

2. The term of office of all elected administrative positions shall be one (1) year, commencing in January, and may be reelected each additional year thereafter.
3. Upon election, they shall obtain and familiarize themselves with The Church Constitution and By-Laws.

Article V

The Leadership Council

A. Definition & Purpose

The Leadership Council is comprised of the elders and deacons. This council is established to provide a venue for prayer and ongoing communication between the elders of The Church and the deacons and so maintain the unity of The Church and advance the fulfillment of her mission.

B. Responsibilities

1. Elders: To bring to the deacons' particular needs of a broader scope. To continue to train and build up the deacons for the work of ministry. To lead the deacons in praying for the church and the church's ministries.
2. Deacons: To inform the elders and one another regarding their areas of service (see Art. III.E.4)
3. Reviews and approves annual Church budget prepared by Deacon(s) of Finance before final recommendation to The Church for approval.
4. Reviews and approves initial contracts, major purchases, use of the church facility by outside groups, and designates persons from the Leadership Council to execute contracts.
5. Because the responsibilities of the elders and the responsibilities of the deacons combined satisfy the requirements for directors in California, the elders and deacons will together serve as Directors of the Corporation.

C. Meetings

1. Meetings will be conducted at least every other month and before quarterly members' meetings. The elders will decide who will serve as the chair of the Leadership Council and recording secretary.
2. A simple majority vote is needed on all Leadership Council decisions.

Article VI Amendments

A. Amendments

Amendments to the By-Laws may be adopted if the following guidelines are met:

1. Amendments or recommendations will be given to the elders for consideration. If after review the elders deem the amendment appropriate it will be presented to the Leadership Council.
2. If the Leadership Council considers the amendments appropriate it will be recommended to The Church membership for action at a quarterly members meeting. Copies of the proposed amendment along with a voting date will be available to the members present at each worship service for four (4) weeks before the vote is taken.
3. A greater than 66% majority of voting church members is necessary for the approval of amendments.
4. If the Leadership Council or elders determine that an amendment should not go to the church, the Leadership Council or elders will explain the decision to the member(s) who proposed the amendment. If that member chooses to present the proposed amendment to the Church, he/she may do so at a members' meeting

- B.** The By-Laws as amended and adopted shall supersede and nullify any other previously adopted By-Laws. All amendments shall become effective immediately after adoption by The Church. The Church Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining the record of any amendments to the By-Laws.

**Article VII
Authority of Scripture**

If any provisions of these By-Laws contradict the Scriptures, the Scriptures supersede the By-Laws.

Adopted by Vote of the Church on

April 30, 2023

Date of Approval



Signature of the Church Clerk

Signed Amendments and minutes of members' meeting regarding approval of these by-laws are filed in church office.