

# **Stewartstown Baptist Church**

## **Stewartstown, PA**

### Bylaws

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## **Article I. Church Membership**

### **Section 1. General**

This is an autonomous and democratic Southern Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership reserves the right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

### **Section 2. Reception and Qualifications of Members**

To be a member of this church, an individual must have confessed Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, must have been baptized by immersion, and must have had his or her request for membership approved by the congregation at a church business meeting.

#### **(a) Presentation:**

To be presented to the church as a candidate for membership, the candidate must complete the following three steps:

1. Publicly offer himself or herself as a candidate for membership at any regular church service in one of the following ways:
  - a. By profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and submission to the ordinance of baptism by immersion
  - b. By promise of a letter of recommendation and receipt of that letter from another church of like faith and order.
  - c. By statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion or submission to baptism by immersion.
  - d. By restoration. (See Article I. Section 5, Article I. Section 6)
2. Interview with the Pastor or his designated ministerial staff member.
3. Complete an age-appropriate new member's orientation class. This class completion requirement may be waived at the Pastor's discretion.

Note: In very exceptional circumstances where baptism by immersion is physically unfeasible, the baptism requirement may be waived by the Pastor.

#### **(b) Election:**

A candidate shall be presented to the church at a regular business meeting upon completing the three steps listed above. A three-fourths vote of members present and voting shall be required to elect a candidate to membership.

### **Section 3. Duties of Members**

Members of this church shall be expected to:

1. Be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life, as more fully defined in Article III, "Statement of Faith" of the Constitution.
2. Attend faithfully the services of this church.
3. Give regularly for its support and its causes.
4. Share in its organized work.

#### **Section 4. Rights of Members**

1. Each active member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in business meetings, provided the member is present. Only members 18 years of age and older are permitted to vote in business meetings.
2. Unless otherwise herein provided, each member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as a candidate for elective offices in the church.

#### **Section 5. Termination of Membership**

Membership shall be terminated by confirmation of:

1. Death of the member.
2. Transfer to another Baptist church.
3. Exclusion by action of this church initiated by any member.
4. The formal request of the member or upon verification of regular attendance and active participation in another church that does not request letters.
5. Members who (without just cause or reason after counsel with the Pastor and deacons) fail to attend the church faithfully for a period of one year will be placed on the "Inactive List." After their receipt of formal notice of this action, they will lose their right to vote at meetings of the church. The Pastor and deacons will make every effort to reestablish the member's fellowship with the church. Inactive members may be restored to active membership whenever they indicate a desire to be reinstated and attend church faithfully for three months. Names remaining on the "Inactive List" for more than two years will be removed from the church membership roll by a two-thirds majority vote of the church.

#### **Section 6. Discipline**

##### **(a) Biblical Process:**

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption. Should some serious condition exist with a member that adversely affects the general welfare of the church, the Pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18, I Corinthians 5 and Romans 5. If any member determines that it is necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the active members present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

##### **(b) Restoration:**

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded who is requesting restoration of membership and has demonstrated repentance in his/her life. This is done by the vote of the church.

## **Article II. Church Officers**

### **Section 1. General**

1. All who serve as officers of the church shall be members of this church.
2. No member will be nominated or elected without his/her consent.
3. All books, records, papers and correspondence used by any officer in the fulfilling of the responsibilities of his/her office, shall be considered the property of the church. Upon the completion of his/her term of office, all such materials shall be turned in to the church office.
4. Elected officials may be terminated by resignation or through dismissal by a majority vote of the church at a special business meeting, except as otherwise noted in these bylaws.

### **Section 2. Pastor**

#### **(a) Duties and Responsibilities:**

The Pastor shall be responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament church. He is the leader of worship, proclamation and education, and is responsible to and under God for the performance of all pastoral duties as are set forth in the New Testament. The Pastor shall give himself to the total ministry of the Word, caring for the sick as well as the healthy and the vigorous. He shall lead faithfully the congregation of God, the church staff and organizations, in the performance of their tasks. (Acts 20:28, I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, Hebrews 13:7, 17 and I Peter 5:1-4)

#### **(b) Call:**

The church recognizes its right to call a pastor and further recognizes its responsibility to seek God's will in the process.

**(i) Search:** When a vacancy occurs in the office of the Pastor, a pastor search committee shall be formed according to the bylaws contained in the Pastor Search Committee policy ( Article III. Section 6. (b))

**(ii) Election:** The election of the Pastor shall take place at a special church business meeting called for that purpose. At least two weeks notice of the time and place of this meeting shall be given by letter to the membership of the church at his or her last known address as reflected in church membership records. Voting shall be by ballot. An affirmative ballot of no less than three-fourths of the active members present and voting shall be necessary. Should the candidate recommended by the committee fail to receive a three-fourths affirmative vote, the meeting shall be adjourned without debate and the committee shall seek out and recommend another candidate. ( Article IV. Section 5. (b))

#### **(c) Termination:**

Termination shall be by resignation of the Pastor or dismissal by vote of the church.

- (i) **Resignation:** The Pastor shall give thirty days notice at the time of resignation before terminating responsibilities as pastor unless there is, between the pastor and the church, mutual agreement to the contrary.
  
- (ii) **Dismissal:** The dismissal of the Pastor shall take place at a special church business meeting called for that purpose. At least two weeks notice of the time and place of this meeting shall be given by letter to the membership of the church at his or her last known address as reflected in church membership records. Voting shall be by ballot. An affirmative ballot of a majority of the members present and voting shall be necessary to dismiss the pastor. Should the action fail to receive a majority vote, the meeting shall be adjourned without debate, and the pastor shall be retained. All actions must comply with the personnel policy regarding termination. ( Article IV. Section 5. (b))

**(d) Compensation and Benefits:**

Compensation and benefits shall be as defined in an original letter of understanding and consistent with the personnel policies and budget actions of the church.

**Section 3. Other Ministry and Support Staff**

**(a) Full-time ministry staff:**

Full-time ministry staff members (associate pastor, assistant minister, minister of education, music, youth, etc.) other than the Pastor, when authorized by the church or when a vacancy occurs, shall be enlisted using the pastor search committee process as described in Article III. Section 6. (b).

**(b) Part-time ministry staff and non-ministerial support staff:**

Part-time ministry staff and non-ministerial support staff members (including hourly wage earners) shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The personnel committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of part-time and non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be in consultation with the Pastor, the supervising staff member, and as appropriate, with related committees of the church.

**(c) Job Description:**

A job description shall be provided for each staff position and kept up to date by the personnel committee.

**(d) Annual Review:**

An annual review of each ministry and support staff member shall be conducted separately by both the supervising staff member and the personnel committee.

**(e) Termination:**

A staff member may resign by giving at least two weeks written notice to the church. The church may vote to vacate ministerial staff positions upon recommendation of the

personnel committee, the deacons or the Pastor. Such termination shall be immediate and all actions shall comply with the personnel policy regarding terminations.

#### **Section 4. Deacons**

##### **(a) Purpose and Work:**

Deacons are to advise and assist the Pastor in the spiritual interests of the church, to seek out, visit, and minister to the physical, moral, and spiritual needs of the sick, the aged, and to address necessities among the membership, to review the church membership at least once per year and to inquire as to the regularity and faithfulness of members in attendance and support of the church. They are to serve at the Lord's Supper table and to be zealous to guard and promote the spirit of unity and peace within the church family. They will act as a sounding board from the congregation to the Pastor and shall interest themselves with matters of importance to the church. They will invest their lives in the members of the church to help them become better followers of Jesus.

##### **(b) Interim Pastor:**

In the absence of a Pastor, the deacons of the church will be charged with enlisting qualified supply preachers, and with finding and recommending to the church an interim pastor, as needed.

##### **(c) Selection and Term:**

Deacons are to meet the spiritual qualifications given in I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6. Male members over twenty-one years of age are eligible for election as deacon. New members will be eligible for election as deacons after one year of membership in this church. Deacons shall serve on a rotating basis for a term of three years, with consecutive terms permitted. The number of active deacons desired is one for every eight families or as the church deems sufficient. Election will be held as needed to fill new terms, plus any vacant term caused by death, resignation, or removal of an active deacon. The nominating committee shall consider and present to the church candidates for deacon election as circumstances require.

##### **(d) Ordination:**

The church shall ordain as deacons all men who it elects except those who have been previously ordained by another church of like faith and order. This election and ordination shall be deemed as a call.

#### **Section 5. Moderator**

The moderator for church business meetings shall be presented annually by the nominating committee and must be approved by the church. In the absence of the moderator, the clerk shall call the church to order and a moderator shall be elected for that meeting.

#### **Section 6. Church Clerk**

A clerk shall keep a record of all actions of the church. The clerk is responsible for keeping the register of names of members with dates of admission, baptism, transfer or death. The Clerk shall issue letters for dismissal voted by the church. The church may delegate the

clerical responsibility to the church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office.

**Section 7. Treasurer**

The treasurer shall see that accurate records are maintained of all receipts, disbursements, and the ongoing expenses of ministry. The treasurer will serve as a member of the finance and asset management committee of the church. The treasurer shall provide a monthly financial report to the finance and asset management committee and a report to the church at regularly scheduled business meetings. The treasurer is to be presented by the nominating committee and must be approved by the church.

**Section 8. Financial Secretary**

The financial secretary shall be responsible for tracking, preparing, and distributing annual records of contributions to all contributors by January 31, and supplying these records at other times as may be required.

**Section 9. Trustees**

The trustees will hold in trust the church property and serve as advisors to the Pastor, maintaining and reviewing periodically the church insurance program. They shall sign legal papers as needed and as directed by the church. Trustees have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. ( Article IV. Section 5. (b)) They shall serve on a rotating basis for a term of three years. Trustees shall have been a member of the church for at least one year prior to his/her election to this office. There shall be no less than three nor more than seven trustees serving at a time. Trustees will be ineligible for re-election for a period of one year following the expiration of their last term of service. From the trustees, a president, secretary and treasurer of the corporation will be designated.

## **Article III. Church Ministries, Councils and Committees**

### **Section 1. General, Election and Tenure**

All directors, leaders, Sunday School teachers, ministry coordinators and committee members shall be church members and report to the church. They shall be elected for an annual term or as vacancies occur. All shall assume office at the beginning of the church year or, if necessary, immediately after election. Resignations shall be in writing to the nominating committee. The Pastor, or ministerial staff he designates, is an ex-officio member of all ministries and committees.

### **Section 2. The Church Council**

The church council shall serve the church by leading in planning, coordinating and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church and its organizations. Members of the church council shall be the Pastor (who will chair the committee), associate pastor(s), the various ministry coordinators/chairman (or a designated representative) and the chairman of deacons.

### **Section 3. Administrative Committees**

#### **(a) Nominating Committee:**

The nominating committee shall be elected annually at a regular business meeting to coordinate staffing of all positions of church leadership filled by volunteers from the church body. The committee shall solicit input and recommendations from the church body to enlist a broad spectrum of the membership in expanding and strengthening the work of the church through all of its organizational functions. The committee shall have more than a nominal interest in the ministry, growth and mission of the church. The nominating committee shall consist of a chairman, elected by the church, the chairman of deacons, Sunday School director, and three people elected from the body at large.

Committee responsibilities include:

1. To identify, interview and present to the church for election qualified church officers, deacons, directors, committee chairpersons and members, except as otherwise designated herein.
2. To work in conjunction with the Sunday School director to present all Sunday School teachers.
3. To present a report of nominations prior to the beginning of the church year for all positions.
4. To nominate special committees as assigned by the church and to present nominations to fill vacancies as may occur during the year.
5. The committee shall hold in strictest confidence the work of the committee, its decisions and its evaluations.

#### **(b) Finance and Asset Management Committee:**

The finance and asset management committee shall have fiscal responsibility for the monies of the church. Responsibilities include budget preparation, stewardship education

and expenditure. Prior to the beginning of the church year the committee shall submit an annual budget to the church for approval. The committee shall coordinate and oversee the work of the treasurer, bookkeepers, financial secretary and counting committee. The committee shall include the chairman who is elected by the church, treasurer, assistant treasurer, financial secretary, and four members elected from the body at large.

**Committee Responsibilities Include:**

1. Preparing and submitting a fiscally sound annual budget created with input from the staff, program directors and committee chairmen of the church.
2. Preparing and submitting to the church quarterly a printed budget report indicating income and expenses.
3. During the church year the committee may make recommendations to the church to reallocate funds within budget categories and impose spending curbs, working with the respective directors and committee chairmen.
4. The committee shall review and make recommendations to the church for any exceptional or emergency funding requests that exceed the approved budget by \$1000 or more.
5. The committee shall create and maintain policies and procedures for receiving, counting and depositing of funds, and for the expenditure and disbursement of these funds. They will review and make recommendations for special and designated offerings, annual contribution percentages to the Cooperative Program and Keystone Baptist Association, and the appropriate handling of any exceptional donations (i.e. land, vehicles, or other valuable or unusual items.)
6. The Committee shall arrange for an annual audit of the church finances conducted by an audit team of individuals not directly involved with handling or recording church monies. A policy and procedure will be drafted by the committee specifying the scope and work of the audit team.

**(c) Personnel Committee:**

The personnel committee shall assist the Pastor in all matters relating to personnel management and administration. It shall assess the need for additional staff and make recommendations to the church. It shall hire part-time and non-ministerial staff members when the church authorizes the positions. The committee shall prepare and maintain current job descriptions for all church staff members other than the Pastor. It shall develop and report to the church policies and procedures for personnel administration. It shall also make an annual review of salaries, wages and benefits and recommend to the finance and asset management committee adjustments in the annual church budget. The committee shall include the chairman, elected by the church, one deacon (appointed by the chairman of deacons), one person from the finance and asset management committee (appointed by the finance and asset management committee chairman), and two members elected from the body at large.

**(d) Counting Committee:**

The counting committee shall be responsible for receiving, counting, and depositing in the designated bank, or banks, all funds received as gifts and offering and for reporting amounts received to the treasurer. Appropriate evidence of contributions, such as offering

envelopes will be turned over to the financial secretary. The church will elect the committee chairman. The chairman may enlist additional workers as deemed appropriate.

#### **Section 4. Standing Committees**

##### **(a) Building and Grounds Committee:**

- (i) Membership:** The building and grounds committee shall be composed of a chairman and six members elected by the church. The chairman may enlist additional workers as the committee deems appropriate.
- (ii) Duties:** This committee shall be responsible in matters of property administration. Throughout the year, this committee shall give attention to, and study, the condition and state of repair and appearance of the building and grounds of the church and equipment therein, making arrangements for repairs and improvements authorized by the church and included in the church budget. All matters of major repairs, changes, improvements or items of equipment not included in the budget shall be referred to the Finance and Asset Committee for fiscal review. Purchase of equipment shall be through this committee unless another committee is directed specifically to make studies, report to the church and make necessary arrangements as the church decides.

##### **(b) Hospitality and Fellowship Committee:**

- (i) Membership:** The hospitality and fellowship committee shall be composed of a chairman and one member elected by the church. The chairman may enlist additional workers as the committee deems appropriate.

##### **(ii) Duties:**

**(1) Fellowship Duties:** This committee shall be responsible for planning and coordinating church-wide social and recreation activities, providing opportunities for Christian fellowship that will help strengthen the Body of Christ. They will be responsible for maintaining and setting-up the fellowship hall and kitchen and ensuring that an adequate inventory of supplies is available for church functions.

**(2) Ministry Duties:** The committee will minister to hurting families in times of need (death, illness or other crises) by coordinating the preparation of meals, when not otherwise provided for by family or Sunday School classes.

#### **Section 5. Ministry Groups**

##### **(a) Program Ministries:**

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching, church member training, church leader training, new member orientation, mission education, action, and support. All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control. The purpose of

the ministry groups is to help people become committed followers of Jesus Christ for the glory of God.

- (i) Sunday School:** The Sunday School shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching program of the church. The Sunday School shall be organized by departments and/or classes, as appropriate for all ages, and shall be conducted under the direction of the Sunday School director. The Sunday School director is responsible to the church for planning, conducting, and evaluating the work of the Sunday School.

Responsibilities include:

1. Leading in determining organization, schedules and approaches for teaching the Biblical revelation, reaching persons for Christ and church membership, and performing the functions of the church.
2. Recommending, and assisting, in enlisting workers required by the organization.
3. Guiding in communicating appropriate information to workers about the work of the church and the denomination.
4. Maintaining records for required reports and evaluation of progress
5. Reporting periodically to the church on the status of the program.

- (ii) Music:** The church music program, under the direction of the minister of music, or an elected music director, shall be focused on providing worship music for church services/events through individual, choir, and instrumental means. Its tasks should include: coordination with the Pastor regarding weekly services, recruitment of new worship ministry participants, who are qualified musicians and have Christian life testimonies consistent with our churches "Statement of Faith" (Article III, of the Constitution). This ministry will work closely with the audio/visual ministry to coordinate the various church programs.

**(b) Focus Ministries:**

Organizations serving age or gender-group needs or opportunities in order to help people become committed followers of Jesus Christ for the glory of God. Listed below are some of the focus ministries that we offer to help fulfill these purposes, with other ministries added as needed.

1. Feed the Hungry
2. Kingdom Kids
3. Men's Ministry
4. Sports Camp
5. TeamKID
6. Vacation Bible School
7. Women on Mission (WMU)
8. Youth

**(c) Service Ministries:**

Organizations to inspire, equip, or enable the congregation to serve one another. Coordinators for each of the respective ministries will enlist workers and committee members as they deem appropriate.

1. Audio/Visual
2. Building and Grounds Security
3. Disaster Relief
4. Flowers and Decorating
5. Information Technology
6. Kingdom Prayer Ministry
7. Media and Library
8. Missions
9. Prayer Chain
10. Special Needs
11. Ushers and Greeters

Ministry functions and activities will be further defined in the related Policy and Procedures.

**Section 6. Special Committees**

**(a) Ad Hoc Committees:**

The moderator may appoint a committee for a specific responsibility over a limited period, subject to the override of the church. The committee is established when the moderator announces at a business meeting the title, the purpose, and its membership. An ad hoc committee may also be formed by direct action of the church at a business meeting.

**(b) Pastor Search Committee:**

- (i) Selection:** The pastor search committee shall be elected in the following manner: The church in business meeting, regular or special, shall nominate and elect seven members who represent a balanced spectrum of the church membership (gender, age, organizational experience, etc.). That search committee, once elected, will choose a chairman from the committee members.
- (ii) Task:** Once organized and with fervent prayer, the committee will make reasonable efforts to establish a profile of the kind of pastor the church desires using member surveys, church forums, church self-evaluations and community profiles to guide their search. They shall seek out and nominate a man who meets the qualifications as listed in these bylaws under Article II. Section 2. (a). Only nominations from the pastor search committee will be presented to the church. The presentation and election of a new pastor will be conducted according to these bylaws under Article II. Section 2. (b).

## **Article IV. Church Meetings and Rules of Order**

### **Section 1. Worship Services**

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday, for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The Pastor shall direct the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

### **Section 2. Regular Business Meetings**

The church shall hold regular business meetings quarterly. Notice shall be given in the church bulletin of all upcoming meetings. Appropriate minutes and reports from each meeting will be maintained by the church clerk. The minutes and reports from the previous business meeting shall be submitted by the church clerk as printed copies at the current business meeting to be read and accepted by the membership.

### **Section 3. Special Business Meetings**

Any member may call business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance after consultation with a pastor, deacons, or appropriate committee. A two week notice must be given for specially called business meetings unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date and time of the meeting. Only the items stated on or in the notice shall be considered for action by the church at a special business meeting.

### **Section 4. Church Parliamentary Procedures**

The Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is the authority for parliamentary rules of order for all business meetings of the church.

### **Section 5. Quorum for Business**

#### **(a) Regular Quorum**

Ten percent of the active church membership shall constitute a quorum except as specified in sub-section (b) as follows:

#### **(b) Special Quorum**

Twenty percent of the active church membership shall constitute a quorum for calling a pastor or ministry staff member, dismissing the Pastor, amending the bylaws, the purchase or sale of real estate, or major expenditures of funds not previously provided for in the church budget.

### **Section 6. Church Year**

The church year shall end on the last day of August and begin on the first day of September.

## **Article V. Church Policies & Procedures**

A Church Policies and Procedures Manual shall be created and maintained to ensure clear and consistent operating practices and to communicate these practices within the church body. Policies and procedures are to be written and maintained by the respective staff, committees or organizations. Copies of these policies and procedures will be kept in the church office and made available to any church member. Any disagreement concerning the content of the written policies and procedures will be referred first to the originator(s) and then to a church business meeting for final resolution, if needed.

Recommended Policies and Procedures Include:

- Deacons
  - a. Deacon goals and functions
  - b. Benevolence
- Committees
  - a. Personnel
    - i. Job descriptions
    - ii. Employee benefits
    - iii. Termination policy
    - iv. Sexual misconduct and sexual harassment policy
  - b. Nominating
  - c. Building and Grounds
  - d. Hospitality and Fellowship
  - e. Finance and Assets
    - i. Special and Designated offerings
    - ii. Stewardship and support
    - iii. Expense reports and disbursement
    - iv. Audit Team, scope and work
  - f. Counting
  - g. Pastor Search
- Guidelines for working with children and youth
  - a. Nursery
  - b. Discipline practices
- Church building use guidelines
- Insurance
  - a. Type/level/frequency of review
- Church transportation
- Building Security
- Wedding policies and guidelines
- Program Ministries
  - a. Sunday School
  - b. Music
- Focus Ministries
  - a. Feed the Hungry

- b. Kingdom Kids
- c. Men's Ministry
- d. Sports Camp
- e. TeamKID
- f. Vacation Bible School
- g. Women on Mission (WMU)
- h. Youth
- Service Ministries
  - a. Audio/Visual
  - b. Building and Grounds Security
  - c. Disaster Relief
  - d. Flowers and Decorating
  - e. Information Technology
  - f. Kingdom Prayer Ministry
  - g. Media and Library
  - h. Missions Ministry
  - i. Prayer Chain
  - j. Special Needs
  - k. Ushers and Greeters

### **Article VI. Amendments**

Bylaws may be amended during any regular or special called business meeting of the church. Prior announcement shall be required for the amendment of these bylaws. Either copies of the proposed amendment shall be furnished at a previous business meeting, or a copy of the proposed amendment shall be mailed from the church office to the membership at least two weeks in advance of the meeting in which the proposed amendment is considered. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting during the business meeting shall be required to amend these bylaws. Article IV. Section 5. (b))