**HOBBS FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

**BY-LAWS**

**ARTICLE I**

**NAME AND PURPOSE**

**Section 1. Name**

 The name of the Church shall be **First Baptist Church** of **Hobbs, New Mexico**.

**Section 2. Purpose**

 The Church is formed to support public worship and to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through such ministries as may be determined by the Church

**ARTICLE II**

**CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1. Government**

This sovereign Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ retains unto itself the exclusive right to temporal life of this Church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and the condition of such membership. This Church is a democracy, its authority vested in its members, as set forth herein. The Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but enjoys mutual counsel and cooperation with other evangelical churches.

**Section 2. Candidacy**

 Any person may become a candidate for membership in the Church. All candidates desiring to become members of the Church shall be presented to the Church for election to membership at any regular Church service in any of the following ways:

1. By making a profession of faith and presenting oneself as a candidate for baptism according to the policies of this Church.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church of like faith and order.
3. By restoration upon a statement of a prior conversion experience followed by biblical baptism.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate becoming a member of the Church, the matter shall be referred to the Deacon body for consideration and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of those Church members present at the Church service shall be required to elect such candidate to membership.

**Section 3. Rights of Members**

 Every member of the Church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church in conference, provided the member is present or special provision has been made by the Church for absentee balloting.

 Every member of the Church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the Church.

**Section 4. Termination of Membership**

Membership shall be terminated in any of the following ways:

1. Death of the member,
2. By letter of recommendation to another Baptist church,
3. Exclusion by disciplinary action of this Church, or
4. Erasure upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination.

**Section 5. Discipline**

Should a member become an offense to the Church by reason of immoral or unbiblical conduct, or by denying acceptance of fundamental doctrines of the Church, it shall be the responsibility of the Deacon body to take steps to resolve the offense in accordance with Matthew 18:15-20. After taking the steps outlined in Matthew 18:15-20, if the Deacon body determines exclusion of the member becomes necessary, after due personal notice and hearing in private by the Deacon body, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance, membership may be withdrawn upon recommendation of the Deacon body, and upon the vote of a 75% majority of the members present at a meeting called for such purpose.

**ARTICLE III**

**CHURCH OFFICERS, STAFF AND TEAMS**

 All who serve as officers and staff of the Church and those who serve on Church Ministry Teams shall be members of this Church.

**Section 1. Church Officers**

The officers of this Church shall include but not be limited to the following: Pastor, Ministerial staff, Deacons, and Trustees.

**(1) Pastor**

The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the Church staff to perform their tasks.

 The Pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. As such, he works with the Deacons and Church staff to: (1) lead the Church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) care for the Church’s members and other persons in the community.

 A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. When a vacancy occurs, a Pastor Search Team shall be elected. The date of said election will be announced two Sundays prior to the election. The Pastor Search Team shall consist of seven people; of which no less than two can be deacons and no less than two shall be women.
Church members not in deacon body should be considered. (In case of a tie vote, a run-off election shall be held on the next Sunday after the vote.) The team will elect their own chairman and proceed to prayerfully seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in seeking God’s man to be the pastor. The Pastor Selection Team shall seek out a suitable Pastor, and its recommendation will constitute a nomination. The Team shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one name at a time. Only recommendations made by the Pastor Search Team will be accepted.

 The date that the prospective pastor comes before the church will be announced at least two Sundays in advance. The Pastor Search Team shall provide the church family an opportunity to meet the prospective pastor and his family by organizing activities and mailing out biographical information of the prospective pastor to all church families no later than ten days prior to the get acquainted activities. The vote on the prospective pastor shall be taken at the close of the morning worship service wherein the prospective pastor preaches. Election shall be by secret ballot, an affirmative vote of (75%) of those present being necessary for approval. The Deacon Chairman shall appoint five deacons to count ballots and report immediately to the congregation. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his relinquishment or the Church’s declaration as herein below provided.

 The Pastor may relinquish the office of Pastor by giving at least two weeks written notice to the Church of the resignation. The Church may declare the office of Pastor to be vacant and the Pastor’s employment terminated. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, which shall be called as and shall constitute a special business meeting. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a 75% majority of the Personnel Ministry Team and deacon body. The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and that person shall be someone other than the Pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot, and the affirmative vote of 75% of the members present shall be necessary to declare the office vacant and the Pastor upon the Church declaring the office to be vacant, and the Pastor’s employment thereby terminated. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the Pastor, upon the Church declaring the office to be vacant, the Church will compensate the Pastor with no less than one-twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

**(2)** **Ministerial Staff**

The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the Church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined.

 Each employed staff member shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the staff member’s relinquishment or the Church’s declaration as herein below provided. A staff member may relinquish the position by giving at least two weeks’ notice at the time of resignation. The Church may declare the position to be vacant and the staff member’s employment terminated at a meeting called for that purpose. The meeting shall be called upon recommendation of a 75% majority of the Personnel Ministry Team and deacon body. The vote to declare the office of the staff member vacant shall be by secret ballot, and the affirmative vote of a 75% majority of the members present shall be necessary to declare the office vacant and the staff member’s employment thereby terminated. Such vacancy shall be effective immediately unless otherwise so stated. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the staff member, upon the Church declaring the office to be vacant, the Church will compensate the staff member with no less than one-twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

 Other ministerial staff may be called whenever a vacancy occurs or a need arises. In the event of the need for additional ministerial staff, the personnel committee shall bring the issue before the church in a special or general business meeting.

 **(3 ) Deacons**

 Deacons of the Church shall be ordained to provide spiritual leadership for and service to the fellowship of the Church. They shall guard the unity of spirit within the Church, and shall recommend establishment of policies concerning the material interests of the Church and its ministries, subject to the will of the Church.

 Every Deacon of the Church is expected to seek out and occupy a chosen place of service in the Church in addition to performing services as a Deacon. All Deacons shall actively support, with time and finances, the work of the Lord through the various ministries of the Church. All Deacons are expected to regularly attend business meetings of the Church as a matter of example and service, in supplying their voice to these deliberations. All Deacons are expected to attend the Church worship services and perform assigned duties incident to the conduct of the Sunday services.

 The Church shall elect the number of Deacons desired by the Church from time to time. Only those persons who meet the scriptural qualifications set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13, and who have been members of the Church for at least one year shall be elected.

 Elections shall be by ballot after receiving the affirmative vote of a majority of the Church members present at a regular business meeting. Once elected, Deacons shall serve thereafter as long as they are faithful to their duties. A Deacon may no longer serve if the Deacon becomes inactive until such time as the Deacon becomes faithful again, or if requested to separate from the Deacon body upon a majority vote by the Deacons present at a meeting of the Deacons with advance notice to the Deacon so voted upon.

 The officers of the Deacons will be Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary. They shall be elected each year. The Pastor shall be notified of Deacon meetings and invited to attend.

 In accordance with the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the Church. The ministry of the Deacon is to serve with the Pastor and shall be to carry out God’s work in the Church and community in helping the Church members and others in the community any way they can.

 There shall be no obligation to recognize a Deacon who comes to this Church from another church of like faith, but after six months the Deacon may be considered by the Deacon body and recommended by the Deacon body to the Church. A majority vote of the Church members present shall entitle the Deacon to serve as part of the Deacon body of this Church.

 **(4) Moderator**

 The Pastor shall serve as Moderator, presiding over Church business meetings, or upon the Pastor’s request, the Church shall elect a Moderator from the membership as its presiding officer. In the absence of the Moderator, the chairman of the Deacons shall preside or, in the absence of both, the Chairman for the Personnel Ministry Team shall call the Church to order and preside for the election of an acting Moderator.

 In guarding and maintaining the fellowship of the Church, the aim of the Moderator must be to bring about unity among people of different views, ideas, and convictions. The objectives of the Moderator should be to maintain the spirit of Christian love while presiding, to be fair and courteous to all members, to help members understand parliamentary procedures without embarrassment to them, to insist that motions be stated and seconded before discussed, to suggest that a member make a motion by stating "A motion is in order to”, to call on the person who makes a motion to discuss it first, to encourage full and free debate by leading members to talk through their disagreements and try to avoid trivial matters, to alternate discussions so as to bring out both sides of a question by giving a member who has not spoken preference over the one who has, to respect the minority who has a right to be heard even through the majority must prevail, and to always take the affirmative vote first and the negative vote second.

**(5) Trustees**

 The Church shall elect annually five (5) trustees to act for the Church in legal matters who shall serve until successors are elected. They shall hold the Church property in the corporate name of the Church. Should the need arise for the replacement of a trustee, the trustees currently serving will choose an individual(s) to nominate before the church at a special or general business meeting. They shall serve until the next annual year.

 Upon specific vote of the Church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any Church property, but not otherwise. When the signatures of the Trustees are required, any three or more shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to Church approved matters.

**Section 2. Nonministerial Staff**

The support staff members shall be employed as the Church determines the need for their services.

 Such employment and termination of services shall occur after consultation with the supervising staff member, the Pastor, and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related Ministry/Service Teams of the Church.

**ARTICLE IV**

**CHURCH FINANCES**

**Section 1. Budget**

 The Financial Ministry Team, shall prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for members’ use.

 It is understood that membership in this Church involves financial obligation to support the Church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Annually there shall be opportunity provided to secure worthy commitments of financial support from the Church members.

**Section 2. Accounting Procedures**

 All funds received for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the financial secretary and be properly recorded on the books of the Church.

 A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Financial Ministry Team.

 The Financial Ministry Team shall be authorized to select and designate such depository or depositories for the funds and securities of the Church as they shall deem proper. All checks, notes, and contracts for the Church, and all orders for deposit or withdrawal of securities from the designated depository or depositories shall be signed by the Church Treasurer and/or other person(s) authorized by the Church.

 It shall be the policy of the Church to conduct an independent audit on an annual basis. The Trustees shall contract the independent auditor and full disclosure of findings shall be made available to the Church.

**Section 3. Fiscal Year**

The Church fiscal year shall run concurrently with the calendar year.

**ARTICLE V**

**AMENDMENTS**

 Changes in these Bylaws may be made at any business meeting of the Church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting or upon request. Amendments to the Bylaws shall have a concurrence of a 75% majority of the members present and voting.

**ARTICLE VI**

**OPERATION AND DISSOLUTION**

 This Church is organized and operated primarily for the purpose of engaging in religious worship or promoting the spiritual development or well-being of individuals. It is to be operated in a way that does not result in the accrual of distributable profits, realization of private gain resulting from payment of compensation in excess of a reasonable allowance for salary or other compensation for services rendered, or realization of any othe form of private gain.

 The Church pledges its assets for use in performing the organization’s religious functions. It directs that on discontinuance of the Church by dissolution or otherwise, the assets are to 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 of 1986, as amended. **REVISED
(Adopted 2-10-08)**

**REVIEWED
(10-7-20 by ADF Church Alliance)**