

CONSTITUTION

Article I. Name

This body will be known as Matthew Road Baptist Church (MRBC) and is located at 4601 Matthew Road, Grand Prairie, Texas 75052. The business address can be changed by a majority vote of the Deacons.

MRBC is not organized for profit, and has been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit, tax exempt institution under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

If Matthew Road Baptist Church ever dissolves its membership, the property known as Matthew Road Baptist Church will be gifted to the Dallas Baptist Association, a religious organization with which we are affiliated.

Article II. Statement of Faith

We believe that there is one eternal triune God, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all honor, obedience, confidence, and love; revealing Himself in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, without division of nature, essence, or being. All three persons are infinite and without beginning.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, God in flesh, fully human, fully God, maker of all that is made. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, substitutionary death, burial, bodily resurrection, and visible ascension into heaven, where He now rules with the Father at the Father's right hand.

We believe that God the Holy Spirit exalts Christ, illuminates humans to understand truth, convicts humans of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; calls people to the Savior, effects regeneration, and baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He indwells believers, provides them with spiritual gifts, and empowers them to bear good fruit. He seals believers unto the day of redemption.

We believe the Bible is the Word of God, written by men under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and given as final authority to reveal the nature of God and His purposes, and the final authority over all faith and practices. The Bible is fully inspired by God and is, thus, free of error.

We believe all humans are specially created by God, made in His image, male and female, possessing infinite worth, for the express purpose of bringing glory to God and to enjoy God. Adam and Eve sinned against God, thereby bringing sin upon the entire human race. Since that day, every human being has continued to sin by nature and by choice.

We believe that God in His infinite mercy, through the substitutionary death and resurrection of Christ, reconciles to Himself every person who receives the gift of salvation by repenting of one's sins and believing in the atonement of Jesus Christ for sin. This is the only means of salvation. Humans, being dead in sin, are made alive by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby they are enabled to exercise this faith and be justified by God.

We believe God's gracious purpose for people is their sanctification, which includes repentance characterized by a changed life and saving faith evidenced by kingdom service and good works.

We believe that the church is a universal body of believers in all ages from all parts of the world. We also believe that there is a local church, an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant. We believe

the purpose of the church is to honor Christ's life, death, and resurrection for us by worshipping, preaching the Word of God, celebrating the ordinances, giving of our resources, caring for widows and orphans, and seeking the salvation of the lost in our communities and around the world. Our congregation is the interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application for purposes of MRBC's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline. The Lead Pastor, in consultation with the Ministerial Staff and the Deacon Body, will provide interpretive leadership to the congregation.

We believe that Christ instituted two church ordinances. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience, in which a believer identifies with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and is requisite for church membership. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby believers, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of Christ and anticipate His second coming. Neither of these ordinances has any ability to save.

We believe that the family is the first human institution given by God. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a loving covenant relationship for life. Any sexual expression outside the covenant relationship between husband and wife violates God's standard. The relationship between husband and wife should be a portrayal of the relationship of Christ and His church. Children are to obey their parents, and parents are to lovingly raise their children to know God and honor Him with their lives.

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the believer and the endless punishment of the unbeliever.

Article III. Church Covenant

God places His people in fellowship in local congregations by His sovereign will in order to worship and to serve, to love and care for others, to pray, to learn, to give, and if necessary, to die, all for the sake of the Gospel. Church membership conveys both privilege and responsibility both sacrifice and reward, both serving others and being served.

Because God gifts us all as He sees fit and adds us to His church as He sees fit, we all have roles to play in the life of the church - places of service and places of ministry. Every member, properly living out his faith and diligently using his gifts and resources, is important to the life and mission of the church.

Because God includes members in the local church by His volition, membership is not a casual thing, neither to be entered into nor ended casually. Church membership is covenantal in nature.

Therefore the responsibilities of Matthew Road Baptist Church to its members are as follows:

1. We covenant to seek God's will for our church body, teaching, preaching, studying, and following the Holy Spirit, under the authority of the Bible.
2. We covenant to care for each other, our fellow members, and seek the growth of each member as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping each member for service and praying for each other regularly.
3. We covenant to be on guard together against false teachers and false doctrine.
4. We covenant to practice Biblical standards for relationships in the church, to forgive early and often, to let small offenses go, and to utilize church discipline when necessary for the protection of each individual member and for the protection of the unity and purity of the church.

5. We covenant to set an example for each other and join together in fulfilling the responsibilities of church membership.

And the responsibilities of members of Matthew Road Baptist Church are as follows:

1. We covenant to maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. Our relationship will be evident through our participation in weekly worship services, Lord's Supper, MRBC community life, service, and lives that glorify Jesus.
2. We covenant to be in agreement with the MRBC Statement of Faith and will not be divisive to its teaching.
3. We covenant, by God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved us from our sin, so that we can live new lives. We covenant to renounce sinful behavior in accordance with the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. Should we sin in such a manner, we agree to confess our sins to Christian brothers or sisters and seek help to put our sin to death. We covenant to be faithful, purposeful, regular, and joyful givers of our time, energy, money, and gifts, with a desire to share graciously with others for the common good and the advancement of the Gospel.
4. We covenant to be submissive to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace within the body. We covenant to submit to church discipline as outlined in Scripture.
5. We covenant to fellowship with other believers as a source of encouragement, hope, accountability and strength, and renounce attitudes and actions such as malice, slander, anger, gossip, envy, bitterness, and jealousy. We will forgive early and often, examining ourselves before examining others. We covenant to accept the responsibility to notify MRBC leadership if, at any time, we can no longer commit to this covenant, or if we have any questions, comments or concerns regarding covenant membership in the church. We also covenant that if we should discontinue our membership at MRBC for any reason, we will enter into a covenant relationship with another like-minded church.

Article IV. Statement of Purpose

MRBC is a New Testament church. As such, we purpose to devote ourselves to teaching, studying, and living out the Bible, to fellowship, to the ordinances, and to prayer (Acts 2:42, Matthew 28:19). We purpose to pursue the Great Commission - to witness and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). We purpose to love one another and to encourage and build each other up (1 John 3:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:11). We purpose to offer acceptable worship to God (Romans 12:1). We purpose to glorify God (Romans 15:5-6, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

BYLAWS

Article I. Membership

Section 1. Conditions of Membership

Individuals may join the fellowship of Matthew Road Baptist Church upon meeting all the following conditions:

1. They must have professed faith in Jesus Christ.
2. They must have been baptized according to Scripture, consistent with our Statement of Faith.
3. They must meet with an authorized representative of MRBC to discuss the covenant nature of church membership as required by MRBC.
4. They must attend a new member's class.
5. They must agree with the MRBC Statement of Faith and the Church Covenant.
6. They must be presented to the church as affirming their faith in Christ and their covenant relationship with MRBC.
7. They must be approved by a majority vote of the members present at the next business meeting.

Members in Good Standing have the right to serve the church and vote at church business meetings. To be a Member in Good Standing, a member must

- Conduct oneself in accordance with this Constitution and Bylaws
- Attend worship services regularly
- Not be under church discipline

Section 2. Rights of Members

Every Member in Good Standing is entitled to one vote (per issue requiring a vote) at Business Meetings. This vote cannot be exercised by proxy. Only Members in Good Standing are entitled to vote.

Members in Good Standing may serve the church as opportunity and gifting align.

Section 3. Termination of Membership

Membership can be terminated in the following ways.

1. Members, unless under discipline, can, in writing, request to terminate their membership. Upon receipt of the request, they will be removed from membership.
2. Members who move their fellowship to another church will be considered to have terminated their membership.
3. Members who are under church discipline, upon recommendation of the Pastors and Deacons and a majority vote of the church, can have their membership terminated.
4. Members failing to attend worship services over an extended period of time may have membership terminated. After a reasonable effort to contact them, the Pastors and Deacons may recommend termination of membership. A majority vote of the church will terminate membership.

Section 4. Discipline

By definition, church discipline is redemptive rather than punitive in nature. The intent is to restore fellowship between the disciplined member and the church as a whole. Scripture will be used as the template. Passages such as Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 and 2 Corinthians 2:5-8, among others, have direct bearing on this process.

In most cases, the nature of the discipline process will be kept confidential. If the reason for the discipline is a very public matter, the congregation will be kept informed of the process as it unfolds. With the goal of restoration in mind, members agree that once the disciplinary procedure commences, they will remain members until the disciplinary procedure is completed.

Every reasonable effort will be made to restore the relationship. If resolution cannot be achieved and, in the opinion of the Pastors and Deacons, continued association with the disciplined member is harmful to the mission or welfare of the church, the disciplined person will have church membership terminated.

Discipline can be concluded at the discretion of the Pastors and Deacons.

Article II. Church Offices

Section 1. Lead Pastor

1. Qualifications:

The Lead Pastor's life and conduct will reflect the teachings found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. He must also be ordained by this church or a church of like faith and order, and he must subscribe in all points to the MRBC Statement of Faith.

2. Duties and Privileges:

The Lead Pastor will lead the church in carrying out its commission as a New Testament church, consistently modeling the MRBC Statement of Faith. His primary responsibility is to preach and teach the Word of God, in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with great patience. He will also lead the pastoral ministry of the church, both to members and to the community.

The Lead Pastor will oversee the church staff and the various organizations within the church in the performance of their tasks, always with the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the ultimate motivation and object.

The Lead Pastor will be an ex officio member of all standing committees of the church. He will also preside at business meetings.

A complete job description for the Lead Pastor will be maintained by the Personnel Committee.

3. Method of Calling:

When the office of Lead Pastor becomes vacant, a Pastor Search Committee will be elected by the church to find, interview, and recommend a candidate for the position of Lead Pastor. This committee will consist of seven people plus two alternates. All committee members must be Members in Good Standing. Four of the positions on the committee will be reserved for Deacons. Two close relatives may not serve on the Pastor Search Committee.

In order to elect this committee, announcements will be made in all worship services and publications for two weeks preceding election Sunday. On election Sunday, each Member in Good Standing may submit up to five names on a secret ballot.

The Deacons will total the ballots and contact nominees in the order of number of votes they received to determine if they are willing to serve on the committee. The four positions reserved for Deacons will be filled first, with the other three positions and the two alternate positions filled by the remaining nominees. All three categories of committee member (Deacons, members at large, and alternates) will be seated in order by the number of votes each received. Deacons may also be members at large if they receive the required number of votes.

The committee will elect its own chairman from among the Deacons serving on the committee. Alternates will be present at all meetings and other activities of the search committee, so that if called upon to fill a vacancy on the committee, they will be ready to contribute. The expenses of the committee will be paid by the church.

The Pastor Search Committee will nominate an Interim Pastor who will not be considered for Lead Pastor. A seventy-five percent majority positive vote of Members in Good Standing in the services will constitute a call to the Interim Pastor. The Deacons will be responsible for filling the pulpit until an Interim Pastor is called. The Deacons may delegate additional pastoral duties to others.

When the Pastor Search Committee has selected its nominee as a prospective Lead Pastor, the church membership will be notified by announcements in all worship services and via normal methods of communication one week prior to the scheduled vote.

On the designated Sunday, at the close of each worship service, the Chairman of the Pastor Search Committee will present the recommendation before the church. A vote of the Members in Good Standing by yes/no ballot will be taken and the Deacons will count the votes. A seventy-five percent or greater yes vote will constitute a call to the new Lead Pastor.

If, for any reason, a call is not extended by the church to the man recommended by the Pastor Search Committee, or if a call is declined by the nominee, the committee will begin its work anew and come to the church in the same manner prescribed above and present a second recommendation. This process will be followed until a Lead Pastor has been called by the church.

4. Tenure:

The Lead Pastor will serve at the pleasure of the church with the privilege of resigning at any time by written notice to the chairman of the Deacons and the chairman of the Personnel Committee.

5. Removal From Office:

If a serious issue or issues arise which call into question the fitness of the Lead Pastor to continue, the Deacons will call a meeting of the Deacons and the Personnel Committee. When a quorum of the Deacons is declared, the meeting will be called to order and the issue(s) concerning the Lead Pastor's fitness to serve will be discussed.

If the Deacons and the Personnel Committee (excluding the Lead Pastor) determine by a majority vote that the Lead Pastor is unfit to continue serving as Lead Pastor, the matter will be brought before the Church in a regular or special Business Meeting of the church. A minimum of 7 days' notice will be given to the church and the Lead

Pastor prior to the meeting via normal methods of communication. In the Business Meeting, after review of the situation and after the Lead Pastor has had an opportunity to address the members, a vote will be taken. A majority vote of the Members in Good Standing to remove the Lead Pastor will result in his immediate removal as Lead Pastor.

Section 2. Church Staff

The church will call or employ such staff members as the church determines necessary. Their duties will be stated in job descriptions formulated by the Personnel Committee, who may use the advice and recommendations of leadership within the church to create job descriptions.

Ministerial staff will acknowledge and conduct both their private and professional lives in accordance with the MRBC Statement of Faith. The job description of non-ministry positions may require the same standard.

The Personnel Committee will be responsible for screening, selecting, and recommending to the church the employment and termination of staff members other than the Lead Pastor. Staff performance will be evaluated by the Personnel Committee.

Ministerial staff, upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee, may be terminated by a majority vote at a Business Meeting.

Non-ministerial staff members may be terminated by majority vote of the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will consult with the Lead Pastor in such situations.

The Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Finance Committee, will recommend salaries and benefits to the church for all employees.

Section 3. Deacons

1. Office:

The office of Deacon is recognized as a higher calling, one of servant leadership rather than ruling or governing. Consistent with the New Testament (Acts 6, 1 Timothy 3), the purpose of the Deacon is to aid the Pastors, minister to the membership, and lead the congregation by example in living out all points of our Statement of Faith.

2. Qualifications:

Each man serving as a Deacon will acknowledge and conduct both their private and professional lives in accordance with the MRBC Statement of Faith. Additionally, the Deacon's life and conduct will be in harmony with the special requirements described in 1 Timothy 3: 8-13 and Acts 6: 1-6.

As a practice, MRBC selects candidates from the male Members in Good Standing who are at least 21 years of age and have been members for at least six months.

A man selected to be a Deacon may not serve as a Deacon until he has been ordained in this church or in another church of like faith and order.

3. Nomination and Selection of Deacons:

Each year the Deacons will compile a list of prospective candidates. After two weeks of announcements in church worship services and in the bulletin, nomination of Deacons will be held. Each Member in Good Standing may nominate as many men as they feel led to by the Holy Spirit. Nomination by absentee ballot is allowed for Members in Good Standing who cannot attend the voting. The active Deacons will count the ballots.

The Deacons will work with the Lead Pastor to evaluate the service needs of the church for the following year and will determine the number of men who are needed as new Deacons. After consulting with the Lead Pastor, the Deacons will contact, question, and interview qualified men with the highest vote totals.

At a Business Meeting, the Deacons will recommend the new Deacon candidates for a vote by the church.

4. Term of Service:

A Deacon will be elected to serve a term of office of three years. Following their term of office, Deacons move to inactive status and remain so until reelected in the manner described above.

5. Meetings, Quorum, Vote and Recommendation:

The Deacons will meet in regular session. Ad hoc meetings may be held when the Lead Pastor or chairman of the Deacons determines their necessity.

A quorum will exist when fifty percent or more of the active Deacon body is present at a regular or ad hoc meeting. A recommendation will be considered approved when a majority of the quorum votes in favor of the motion. No action of the Deacon body is binding on the church unless authority has been previously given it by a majority vote in a Business Meeting or unless assigned by this constitution.

The Deacons will keep minutes of their own meetings.

6. Deacon Officers:

Deacons will elect their own officers from the body of active Deacons. The officer positions are:

1. Chairman of the Deacons
2. Vice-chairman of the Deacons
3. Secretary

Section 4. Church Clerk

The Church Clerk serves at the pleasure of the church and will be a Member in Good Standing. The Nominating Committee will nominate persons to serve in this church elected position.

The Church Clerk is responsible for the keeping of accurate records of all official church business. These records will become church property and will be made available, upon request, to any member. The Clerk will keep an accurate and up-to-date register of the church members baptisms, deaths, and admissions to or dismissals from the church. The Clerk will also issue letters of transfer for members joining other Southern Baptist churches. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to the church staff.

Section 5. Minister of Business Administration

The Minister of Business Administration will be a Member in Good Standing and will serve at the pleasure of the church. The Personnel Committee is responsible for filling this position.

The Minister of Business Administration will be responsible for keeping accurate and up-to-date records of all money received by the church. Donors will be given proper credit for their gifts. The Minister of Business Administration will be responsible for preparing and distributing annual records of contributions to all members and other identified contributors. The Minister of Business Administration will work closely with the Finance Committee to pay invoices, handle transfers of funds, and process requests for funds. The Minister of Business Administration or the Finance Committee may delegate any of these responsibilities to others.

Section 6. Trustees

The Trustees serve at the pleasure of the church and will be Members in Good Standing. The Nominating Committee will nominate persons to serve in this church elected position.

They have no authority other than that authorized by action of the church. They will have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action.

The duties of the Trustees will be the execution of legal documents pertaining to real property of the church including but not limited to notes, deeds of trust, and guarantees. To be legally binding, all actions taken will require the signature of two Trustees unless additional signatures are required in the resolution authorizing the action.

The number of Trustees will be no fewer than three and no more than five. Permanent, temporary, part-time, or interim church staff will not serve as Trustees.

Article III. Church Business Meetings

The church will meet regularly to conduct business. Ad hoc meetings can also be called by the Lead Pastor or, in his absence, the chairman of the Deacons.

Business Meetings, both regular and ad hoc, will be announced two weeks in advance of the scheduled date and a general agenda will be made available. All Members in Good Standing are encouraged to attend.

No business will be conducted without a quorum in attendance. A quorum is defined as five percent or more of the Members in Good Standing. Only Members in Good Standing will be issued ballots for ballot votes.

The Lead Pastor will preside at Business Meetings. In the Lead Pastor's absence, the chairman of the Deacons will preside. In his absence a designated staff member or Deacon will preside.

Article IV. Standing Committees

The church will elect all members of standing committees. A committee member must be a Member in Good Standing. Committee members may not serve on more than two standing committees at one time. To prevent even the appearance of impropriety, close relatives may not participate in matters of employment and financial dealings. Two close relatives may not serve on the same Standing Committee.

When vacancies occur on any standing committee, the Nominating Committee will nominate another Member in Good Standing to fill the position. The term of service on a standing committee is three years. At the time of a person's nomination and election, the Nominating Committee may assign that person a shorter term of service in order to synchronize the expiration of terms for members of that committee. The church may vote in any Business Meeting to establish any new temporary or standing committee.

Once formed, committees elect their own officers.

The following are the church's standing committees:

- Finance Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Teller Committee

Section 1. Finance Committee

This committee will have an odd number of members. At least one active deacon will serve on this committee.

The Finance Committee will maintain day to day control of all church expenditures. It will prepare the church's annual budget, approve the budget for each church ministry, and report on the church's finances at each regular Business Meeting. The Finance Committee will develop and maintain policies and procedures for the handling of church finances.

Section 2. Personnel Committee

This committee will have an odd number of members. At least one active deacon will serve on this committee.

The Personnel Committee will recruit and interview prospective church employees (except for the Lead Pastor). The committee will recommend these prospective employees to the church for employment.

When the Personnel Committee fills a ministerial position, two ad hoc members, supplied by the Nominating Committee, will be added to the committee. At least one of these ad hoc members will be a Deacon. Ad hoc members have the sole function of assisting the Committee in filling ministerial positions. Both ad hoc members will be released from the Personnel Committee once the ministerial position is filled. No member of the Finance Committee may serve as an ad hoc member to the Personnel Committee for the addition of staff.

The Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Lead Pastor, will develop and maintain job descriptions for all church employees and review performance.

The Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Lead Pastor, will develop and maintain job descriptions for all church volunteer positions and make them available to volunteers.

The Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Lead Pastor, will develop and maintain policies and procedures regarding positions that work with youth and children. These policies and procedures will mandate due diligence for the protection of both the children and the workers.

The Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Lead Pastor, will work with the Finance Committee to draw up salary packages. The Personnel Committee will consult with the Finance Committee prior to presenting to the church any personnel changes that impact the budget.

Section 3. Nominating Committee

This committee will have an odd number of members. At least one active deacon will serve on this committee.

The Nominating Committee will recruit and nominate Members in Good Standing to serve on all standing committees.

Section 4. Teller Committee

This committee will have enough members to staff a rotation of four teams composed of at least two individuals per team. No one is allowed to count money alone. At least one active deacon will serve on this committee.

The Teller Committee will count weekly contributions and may count other monies collected by the church. The Chairman of Finance, the Minister of Business Administration and the Financial Secretary may help count as the need arises. The team is responsible to deposit such collections at the bank, following procedures written by the Finance Committee.

Article V. Campus Use

Matthew Road Baptist Church facilities and grounds, referred to as campus, are to be used for the glory of God. All uses of our campus will be consistent with this goal and with our Statement of Faith. The campus is not available for public use.

Article VI. Marriage Ceremonies

Weddings conducted under the auspices of MRBC will be consistent with the biblical definition of marriage as reflected in the MRBC Statement of Faith.

Wedding ceremonies conducted at MRBC will consist of an exchange of marriage vows and other ceremonial activities consistent with the exchange of marriage vows. All marriage ceremonies performed by ministers of MRBC will be performed on campus or at a location approved by the Lead Pastor. Only a minister of MRBC may perform a wedding on campus. All couples married at MRBC must complete pre-marital counseling with a counselor approved by the Lead Pastor. Remarriage after divorce, for biblical reasons, will be considered on a case by case basis.

No minister or paid staff member of MRBC will:

- a. Accept payment for performing a marriage ceremony,
- b. Perform a marriage ceremony unless at least one person to be married is a Member in Good Standing.

Article VII. Policies and Procedures

Matthew Road Baptist Church will adopt policies and procedures that contain provisions for the regulation and management of this church. They will be consistent with the Articles of Incorporation, these bylaws, and this constitution.

Our policies and procedures will be consistent with civil law where such law does not conflict with our faith and practice.

Article VIII. Affiliations

MRBC is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and the Dallas Baptist Association.

Article IX. Precedence of this Constitution

Upon adoption of this constitution and these bylaws by Matthew Road Baptist Church of Grand Prairie, Texas, all previous actions of this church which conflict with this instrument will be null and void. In the event of conflict in meaning between this instrument and any further action of the church, the meaning herein will take precedence over any other action or meaning.

Article X. Amendments

This constitution and these bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any business meeting. Notice of the date and time of a business meeting at which a proposed amendment will be considered will be publicized at least seven days prior to the business meeting and will contain the text of the proposed amendment.