

MURPHY ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Article I Introduction

Section 1. Name.

The name of this congregation shall be the Murphy Road Baptist Church of Murphy, Texas.

Section 2. Legal Status.

The Murphy Road Baptist Church of Murphy, Texas shall be a non-profit corporation, organized in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas. This corporation may acquire properties both real and personal; improve and sell the same; borrow money; receive donations; sign notes; and execute all necessary contracts, mortgages, pledges and securities thereof. It is further understood that this corporation has power to give, loan, or use its assets on behalf of other churches, benevolent or missionary societies, educational institutions or individuals whom it may deem worthy.

Section 3. Purpose

The purposes for which this corporation is organized are to promote the worship of God; to persuade all persons to accept Christ as personal Saviour and Lord of Life; to advance the cause of Christ, the principles of justice and humanity; to promote Christian education; to disseminate by every possible proper means the good news of God's grace.

Article II Confession of Faith and Church Covenant

Section 1. Confession of Faith

The complete authority in all matters of faith and practice is the Bible, God's Holy Word. This church adopts and accepts as its confession of faith the Baptist Faith and Message as voted by the Southern Baptist Convention, St. Louis, Missouri, in 1963.

Section 2. Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and, on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations. We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of, and use of, illegal substances and the excess use of intoxicating drinks as beverages; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay. We moreover engage that when we remove this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and with the principles of God's Word.

Article III Membership

Section 1. Composition

The membership is composed of those persons whose names appear upon the church roll at the adoption of this Constitution and by-laws.

Section 2. Methods of Receiving

Members may be received and added to the church roll by a majority vote of the church in four different ways:

A. Baptism

1. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of change of heart, and having accepted the aims and ideals of the church as set forth herein, may be received as a candidate for baptism by vote of the members present at any regular service of the church, and upon baptism automatically becomes a member in good standing.
2. Any person from another denomination that is in good standing with their previous church; acknowledging their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and has been immersed as a symbol of their salvation, may join by statement (see statement item C.)

B. Letter

Applicants for membership by letter from a Baptist Church of like faith, having received Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, having received baptism by immersion, are received upon promise or presentation of this letter, but shall not become a member in full standing until such letter is duly received by the church. Should the Clerk of the church fail to receive such proper credentials within a period of six months, and after notifying the applicant by mail at his last known address, the name of this applicant shall be dropped from the church roll.

C. Statement

When church letters cannot be obtained because of loss of church record or similar unavoidable circumstances, applicants are received upon their own statement offering their faith, baptism and church membership.

D. Restoration

A member of a Baptist Church who has been dismissed for cause, or a Baptist who has joined a church of another faith may be restored to fellowship upon application to the church, and statement to the Pastor concerning his or her orthodoxy and desire to be a cooperating Baptist member and then only upon the approval of the church.

Section 3. New Member Orientation

Immediately after a person has been accepted for church membership, he or she will receive a copy of this Constitution and by-laws and Baptist Faith and Message in order to clarify Baptist doctrine and expectation of members.

Section 4. Transfer of Membership

Letter of transfer for any member shall be granted to any church of like faith and order and upon proper request for letter from said church.

Section 5. Exclusion from Membership

In case a member is guilty of conduct unbecoming of a Christian so that the name of Christ is brought into disrepute, or if a member shall create discord and show a spirit of discontent which shall effect the best interest of the Lord's work in this place, it will be the duty of the Deacons to confer with such member in the hope of restoring such member into proper fellowship. If he or she will not hear these brethren, it will be their duty to report the member's attitude to the church and, if he or she will not hear the church and take the proper Christian attitude, it will be the duty of the church to exclude the members from its membership. In case any member has joined another denomination, his or her name shall be deleted from the church roll by vote of the membership in regular business conference.

Article IV Church Policy

Section 1.

The government of this church is vested solely in the body and members who compose it and shall be subject to no other ecclesiastical body. It has a right to voluntarily choose its affiliations and recognizes no overlord or ruling authority outside itself, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2.

So far as may be consistent with the teachings and principles of God's Word, this church shall cooperate with and have representation in the denominational causes sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and the Collin County Baptist Association.

Section 3.

This church shall not become a member of the National Council of Churches or any of its agencies or any other unionizing church agency.

Article V Business Meetings

Section 1. Procedure

This church shall be governed as a democracy, and shall meet in regularly scheduled business meetings. Every member present and in good standing is entitled to one and only one vote. Robert's Rules of Order (revised) will be used as our guide to parliamentary procedure. The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order (revised) shall govern the business proceedings of this church in all cases not covered by this Constitution. Recognizing this as God's business, the most sacred and important business in the world, we therefore agree:

- A. That the Pastor serve as moderator except as he or the church may request the chairmen of Deacons or some other church officer to serve.
- B. To conduct no business without prayer for guidance and inward submission to the Holy Spirit's leadership.
- C. That, as we are willing and anxious to do God's will, the Holy Spirit, who is in the heart of every redeemed one, will make us to be all of one mind.
- D. That no person shall be allowed to speak who cannot control his temper and his voice and conduct himself as a Christian gentleman or gentlewoman.
- E. If agreement cannot be achieved by a majority vote of those present, the moderator shall be duty-bound to:
 - 1. Halt the business and conduct a prayer session, or
 - 2. Appoint a committee equally representing both sides and table the matter until the next business meeting at which the committee will bring a report, or
 - 3. Dismiss the meeting with prayer.
- F. That, after the church has prayerfully sought God's will in conducting its business, the church family should be willing to abide by the decision of the majority.

Section 2. Order of Business

After the moderator has opened the meeting for business, the business shall include:

- A. Reading of minutes
- B. Clerk's report and letters to grant
- C. Financial report
- D. Reports of organizations, committees, and ministry teams
- E. Unfinished business
- F. New business
- G. Next business meeting
- H. Adjournment

Section 3. Time of Business Meeting

The next business meeting shall be decided at each scheduled business meeting (see section 2G).

Section 4. Special Meetings

- A. In case the need arises where a special business meeting of the church should be called, (1) The Pastor and the Chairman of the Deacons, or (2) The Chairman of the Deacons and the Deacons (in the absence of the Pastor) will discuss the matter and if they feel it is of an emergency nature, they will recommend the church go into a business session. No special business session shall be held without a minimum of five (5) days notice of the meeting and an announcement made in two regular church services or written notice mailed to church members.
- B. If at a regular business meeting the church shall set a date for another business session other than the regular meeting, such action may be taken by majority vote.

Article VI Church Staff

Section 1. Pastor

- A. **Qualifications**
The Pastor of this church shall be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, duly ordained by this church or by a Baptist Church of like faith and order. He shall meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:2-7. He shall be chosen in the manner hereinafter set forth in Section 1B of this Article IV, giving full consideration to his spirit of cooperation, and he shall subscribe to the doctrinal statement and covenant of the church, being in agreement with the policies of the church as herein stated.
- B. **Method of Calling**
In the event the church becomes Pastorless, a Pastor Search Committee of not less than five (5) nor more than seven (7) who demonstrate they are spiritually and doctrinally correct shall be elected by a secret ballot of the church. This committee shall meet together in prayer and for discussion before extending an invitation to anyone to preach before the church in view of a call. Only one nominee for Pastor shall be considered at a time. Members may present names to the Pastor Search Committee for their consideration and investigation. When the Pastor Search Committee is ready to make its recommendation of a prospective Pastor, and when he has preached the Sunday services, morning and evening, the church will vote by secret ballot following the evening services. Acceptance of the committees recommendation constituting a call of a Pastor must have the support of 90% of the members present and voting.
- C. **Tenure of Office**
The Pastor shall be called to serve indefinitely. The tenure of office of the Pastor may be terminated at any time by the Pastor or by the church upon thirty (30) days notice, or otherwise by mutual agreement.
- D. **Duties**
The duties of the Pastor shall be to lead the church in functioning as a New Testament Church. The Pastor is the leader in worship, evangelism, education, and all other ministries of the church. He shall administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's supper (except as hereinafter provided), shall be ex-officio member of all organizations, committees, and ministry teams of the church.

Section 2. Ministerial Staff

- A. This church shall call and employ such ministerial staff, in addition to the Pastor, as the church shall need. A job description, salary, and terms of employment shall be established by the Personnel Ministry Team and voted on by the church when the need for additional staff members is determined.
- B. Ministerial staff members, other than the Pastor, shall be recommended to the church by a special committee of not less than five (5) or more than seven (7) elected by the church. Employment shall be by church action requiring the support of 80% of the members present and voting. The Personnel Ministry Team will perform an annual review of all ministerial staff.

Section 3. Other Church Employees

Other church employees shall be approved by the Personnel Ministry Team, then employed by the appropriate supervisory staff in accordance with the Personnel Policy of the church.

Section 4. Personnel Policy

The Personnel Policy, which shall include a job description and terms of employment, shall direct the church staff. This policy shall be written by the Personnel Ministry Team and approved by the church.

Article VII Deacons

Section 1. Definition

- A. The deacon body is recognized by the church as a body commissioned and set aside in a unique ministry of service to the needs and desires of this congregation as discerned to be the will of God by and for this local congregation.
- B. The method for determining the size of the deacon body shall be shown in the Deacon Election Handbook.
- C. Deacons are elected to serve the church in an active capacity for a period of time as set forth in the Deacon Election Handbook.

Section 2. Ministries

In accordance with the meaning of the work and practice in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. Their task shall be to serve with the pastor and the church staff in the ministries of:

- A. Caring for the church's members and other persons in the community,
- B. Leading the church in achievement of its mission, and
- C. Promoting and participating in the church outreach and visitation.

Section 3. Qualifications

- A. Must be a male member of the church congregation,
- B. Must be a member for a period of at least one year before the time of election,
- C. Must have been baptized at least two years prior to election,
- D. Must believe that the Baptist doctrine is the best expression of the Christian faith,
- E. Must meet and follow the spiritual requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:3,
- F. Must be committed to tithe,
- G. Must be in regular attendance of all worship services, Sunday morning bible study, committee meetings, and ministry team meetings, and
- H. Must be at least 21 years of age on the day of election.

Section 4. Nomination and Election

Deacon nomination and election shall be held annually in the following manner:

- A. Each church member may nominate as many men as required to fill the openings in the active deacon body.
- B. The deacons will tally the nominations to create a list of nominees ordered by the number of votes each received, in descending order. Beginning with those receiving the most nominating votes, the deacons will interview the men to determine each candidate's qualifications and willingness to serve. The deacons may choose at this point to remove a candidate whom they feel is not qualified to serve, and the next candidate in order will replace this individual on the list of candidates.
- C. Prior to their approval by the church body, nominees chosen by the church and reviewed by the deacons will go before the ordination council consisting of all ordained ministers and deacons of the church. Should the ordination council feel any man is unqualified to serve as a deacon, this council may withdraw his name from the list of candidates, and the next candidate in order will replace this individual.
- D. The list of men selected will then be presented to the church for approval. Formal approval by the members of the church body will take place no later than one week after presentation.
- E. Any men elected who has not been ordained will be ordained within 90 days following the election date.

Section 5. Duties

- A. They are to be zealous in guarding the unity of the spirit within the church.
- B. They shall council and confer with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. With the pastor, they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the development of Christians, and the extension and growth of the kingdom of God.
- C. They are to have personal oversight and involvement in the development of the church's members and to seek to know their physical and spiritual needs.
- D. They are to serve the whole church in aiding, encouraging, and developing the membership of the church.
- E. They are to have oversight of the discipline of the church.

Section 6. Procedures

- A. The body of the deacons shall meet regularly for the consideration of all problems and general policies. The body may take any internal structure deemed appropriate. The structure adopted will be shown in the Deacon's Handbook.
- B. Each deacon shall freely confer with the pastor about all matters and problems that in his judgement would be most wisely and spiritually handled in private.

Article VIII Church Officers

Section 1. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be nominated by the church Nominating Ministry Team, and elected annually by the church three (3) months before taking office at the beginning of the fiscal year.

- A. The Treasurer is authorized to disburse funds only as set forth in the budget unless so ordered by the church. The Finance Ministry Team shall control the disbursements of all money and purchases for the church according to money available. All checks shall be signed by the Treasurer and countersigned by others designated by the Finance Ministry Team, or two (2) other designated members of the church.
- B. The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping a correct record of all financial transactions and make a monthly report to the church of all receipts and disbursements, according to the budget schedule. This report shall be printed and placed in the hands of those attending the regularly business meeting.
- C. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer or designated person to receive, preserve and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.
- D. The Treasurer's financial records shall be preserved for a minimum of three (3) years.

Section 2. Clerk

The Clerk shall be nominated by the Nominating Ministry Team and elected at the regular election of church officers.

- A. The Clerk shall keep a careful and accurate record of the official acts of the church and perform all duties pertaining to the office of clerk. The Clerk will make a report at each scheduled business meeting and keep in the church office the minutes of business meetings and reports as presented and adopted at all business meetings.
- B. The Clerk shall maintain an accurate roll of the church membership.

Section 3. Trustees

- A. The Trustees shall consist of three (3) members. They shall be designated as the legal agents of the church and are responsible to carry out the orders of the church. They shall serve on a rotating basis with only one member retiring each year.
- B. The Trustees shall hold in trust the property of the church and shall execute all deeds, debentures, mortgages, liens, transfers, leases, and all other legal documents for and on behalf of the church, but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, transfer or encumber any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action.

- C. One Trustee, the Treasurer and the Pastor will be responsible for all legal papers of the church and shall keep said papers in a safety deposit box provided by the church. There shall be a least two (2) of these persons present to open said safety deposit box.
- D. At each annual election of church officers, the church shall elect a Trustee for a term of three (3) years to replace the retiring Trustee. The Trustees shall elect annually a Chairman and a Secretary.
- E. Each Trustee shall be ineligible for re-election until one year has elapsed following the expiration of the term to which he was elected.

Article IX Programs and Organizations

Section 1

The church may establish (A) Special Committees and (B) Standing Committees at any time it deems appropriate. All Committees shall rotate of 1/3 of its members each year. They shall become eligible for re-election or reappointment after one year.

A. Special Committees

These committees shall be elected by the church for service in matters of a temporary nature, and shall be automatically dismissed when the service for which the committee was elected has been completed, or at the will of the church.

B. Ministry Teams

These teams shall be established by the church to function permanently or until the church deems otherwise. Members shall be elected for a term of three (3) years, unless otherwise specified, and their term shall begin the first of the fiscal year following their election unless otherwise specified. All Ministry Teams shall elect a chairperson to provide monthly minutes to the chairperson of the Team of Teams and be a member of the Church Council. Ministry Teams shall include:

1. Team of Teams

This team shall consist of at least five (5) persons who demonstrate that they are spiritually motivated and actively participating members of the church.

- a. The Team of Teams shall nominate all team membership at least three (3) months prior to the new fiscal year.
- b. The Team of Teams shall be responsible for recommending to the church persons to fill vacancies that may arise on teams during the year.
- c. The team shall be responsible for providing and maintaining a description of the responsibilities and duties of each team.

2. Nominating Ministry Team

This team shall consist of at least five (5) persons who demonstrate that they are spiritually motivated and actively participating members of the church.

- a. Prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year, the Nominating Ministry Team shall present the Team of Teams to be elected.
- b. The Sunday School Director shall be recommended to the church for election at the regular business meeting, two (2) months prior to the new Sunday School year, and shall become a member of the Nominating Ministry Team.
- c. The Nominating Team shall be responsible for recommending to the church for election one (1) month prior to the new Sunday School year all officers and teachers for the coming year including Church Clerk and Trustees. They shall also fill vacancies that may occur during the year.
- d. The Minister of Education shall function as a member ex-officio of this team.

3. Finance Ministry Team

This team shall consist of at least five (5) persons who demonstrate that they are faithful stewards, spiritually motivated and actively participating member of the church. The Treasurer of the church shall be a member of this team.

- a. The Finance Ministry Team shall be nominated by the Team of Teams and elected annually by the church, three (3) months prior to the beginning of the fiscal year which shall be from January 1 through December 31. All members shall serve a 3 year term. The Treasurer may succeed himself with no term limit.
- b. The Finance Ministry team shall have charge and direct the financial program of the church. This committee shall study the financial needs of the church and make necessary recommendations concerning same to the church.

- c. It shall be the duty of this team to prepare an annual budget and submit it to the church for adoption. The budget shall be prepared, presented, and adopted by the beginning of the next fiscal year.
 - d. It shall be the duty of this committee to see that the expenditures are kept within the limits of respective budgets and according to the money available. Any expenditure not in the budget must be approved by the church.
 - e. It shall be the duty of this team to see that a review of all pertinent records is performed monthly.
 - f. The Finance Ministry Team shall establish and maintain a written financial policy for the financial operations of the church. This policy is to be approved by the church.
4. **Baptism and Lord's Supper Ministry Team**
This team shall consist of at least three (3) men and three (3) women who demonstrate that they are spiritually motivated and actively participating members of the church. It shall be the duty of this team to make all necessary arrangements for the administration of the ordinance of baptism, preparing for and administering the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and to assist the Pastor in the performance of same.
 5. **Usher Ministry Team**
This team shall consist of at least eight (8) spiritually motivated and actively participating members of the church. It shall be the duty of this committee to provide ushers for all services of the church.
 6. **Personnel Ministry Team**
This team shall consist of at least five (5) spiritually motivated and actively participating members of the church.
 - a. This team shall approve the hiring of all paid employees of the church except the pastor.
 - b. This team shall maintain and review the written Personnel Policy of the church, and shall establish and maintain job descriptions and annual reviews of all the employees.
 7. **Additional Ministry Teams**
The church shall elect teams for the advancement of its programs as it expands and additional committees become necessary. Names and descriptions of the responsibilities of such teams will be maintained by the Team of Teams.

Article XI Ordinances

Section 1. Baptism

The ordinance of baptism may be administered at any worship service for the benefit of all candidates who have united with the church upon public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Baptism shall be administered by the Pastor or any other person authorized by the church. Candidates for baptism shall participate in one or more sessions of instructions as deemed advisable by the Pastor prior to the time of baptism of the candidate.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once a quarter. The Pastor and Deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

Article XII Licensing and Ordaining

Section 1.

Any adult member may be licensed to the gospel ministry if, in the judgment of the church, they give evidence by their devotion to God that they have surrendered to God's call to the ministry. After having preached or given their testimony in the hearing of the church, they may be licensed, provided three-quarters (3/4) of the members present at any regular meeting shall agree thereto. Such license may be revoked at any time upon improper conduct or practice.

Section 2.

The church may ordain any person to the gospel ministry upon request by a sister or our own church. The person must possess the spiritual qualifications as found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

**Article XIII
Repeal**

Section 1.

This Constitution and By Laws repeals, supersedes and makes void all former or similar documents adopted by Murphy Road Baptist Church of Murphy, Texas.

**Article XIV
Effective Date**

Section 1.

This Constitution and By Laws shall become effective upon its adoption by 2/3 majority of the church members present and voting.

**Article XV
Amendments**

Section 1.

This Constitution and By Laws adopted in compliance thereto may be amended by 2/3 vote of membership present and voting at any meeting of the church called for that purpose, the proposed amendment being inserted in the call, such call to be in writing and placed before the church at a business meeting and sent to each family of the church by mail announcing time of meeting, not less than two (2) weeks before the time of the proposed action, and read from the pulpit at the morning service on the Lord's Day next preceding proposal.

**This Constitution and By Laws was adopted by the Murphy Road Baptist Church
_____, 1987.**