

# Silver Lake Baptist Church

## BY-LAWS

Revised September 1, 2016

### ARTICLE I. Membership

#### Section 1 General Procedure

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Board of Elders. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the Church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members, or upon transfer of members to other churches. Reception of members may, without special notice, be acted on by groups, within the Church, more limited than the full membership of the Church, using procedures specifically authorized by vote of the Church at a regular business meeting upon recommendation of the Board of Elders.

#### Section 2 Admission by Baptism

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of change of heart, and having accepted the faith, aims and ideals of this Church as expressed in the **Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant**, may be received into membership by baptism, upon recommendation of the Board of Elders.

#### Section 3 Admission by Letter

Members from other Baptist churches holding like faith may be received as members with us upon presentation of letters of transfer from such churches, and upon acceptance of the faith, aims and ideals of this Church as expressed in the **Affirmation of Faith** and the **Church Covenant**. If such credentials be of older date than six months prior to their presentation, the applicant may be required to furnish additional information.

#### Section 4 Admission by Experience or Restoration

All applicants for membership other than by baptism or by letter of transfer, that is by Christian experience if previously baptized, or by restoration, shall be received into the church in the same way as those by baptism, except the ordinance shall not be administered.

#### Section 5 Instruction to New Members

All persons uniting with this Church in any of the ways set forth in Sections 2 through 4 above shall previously, by the Board of Elders, be made acquainted with the **Affirmation of Faith** and the **Church Covenant**. New members shall pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations as to worship, service, and giving, when they make public profession of faith and join the church.

## **Section 6          Discipline of Members**

The purpose of church discipline is to effect a return to a Biblical standard of conduct and doctrine in a member who errs ([Galatians 6:1](#)), to maintain purity in the local church ([1 Corinthians 5:6](#)) and to deter sin ([1 Timothy 5:20](#)).

Any member of this church who teaches or insists on holding false doctrine, and persistently conducts himself or herself in a manner inconsistent with Biblical teaching, or who persists in disturbing the unity or peace of the church shall be dealt with as follows, according to [Matthew 18:15-18](#):

- a. It is the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of an erring member's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct the erring member in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.
- b. If the erring member does not heed this warning, the warning member shall again go to the erring member accompanied by one or two other members as witnesses to warn and correct, seeking repentance and restoration.
- c. If the erring member still refuses to heed the warning, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Elders, who, upon careful and prayerful investigation, shall tell it to the church encouraging the congregation to pray for repentance and restoration of the erring member.
- d. If the erring member refuses to heed the warnings of the Board of Elders and the church, he or she shall be dismissed from the church pursuant to the Scriptures and treated as an unbeliever. There shall be no appeal of the discipline process or the dismissal to any court. The congregation shall be encouraged to pray for the repentance and restoration of the erring member.

It is clearly understood that the discipline process will continue to conclusion whether the erring member leaves the church or otherwise seeks to withdraw from membership.

## **Section 7          Termination of Membership**

Membership may be terminated in one of four ways:

- a. By physical death.
- b. By transfer: When it is requested, the Board of Elders may grant to a departing member in good standing, a letter of dismissal to the fellowship of another church. No such letter may be given to a member who is at the time under the corrective discipline of this church. The Board of Elders may refuse to grant a letter of transfer to any church which is in their judgment disloyal to the gospel ([Jude 3](#)).
- c. By exclusion: If a member habitually absents himself from the stated meetings of the church without valid reason, or if due to relocation he ceases to maintain a vital contact with the church, he may be excluded from membership. If an excluded member applies again for membership, the procedures set forth will again be followed.
- d. By dismissal as a final step of church discipline. The Board of Elders shall only apply the above-mentioned dismissal in strict accordance with the Scriptures.

## ARTICLE II. Church Government

### Section 1 GENERAL STATEMENT

- a. Officers. The Officers of the Church shall be an Elder Board and the Deacons. Officers shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the Church as provided for in these By-Laws. All officers of the Church shall be members of the Church in good and regular standing. The Elder Board shall be composed of men only; the Deacons may be composed of both men and/or women. Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) below, the Elder Board and the Deacons are the only bodies and positions created by these By-Laws.
- b. Church Clerk, Treasurer and Financial Secretary. The Church, upon nomination by the Elder Board shall elect at the annual meeting, members to the positions of Church Clerk, Treasurer and Financial Secretary. The functions of Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall not be performed by one member. The Elders shall provide a written description of duties to the Church Clerk, Treasurer and Financial Secretary.
- c. Committees and Appointees. The Elder Board has the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The Elder Board has the authority to dissolve any committee or position which it created. The Elder Board also has the authority to appoint Elders, Deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions. The Deacons may nominate candidates for any committee or position, with appointment by the Elder Board. The Elder Board may delegate to the Deacons the authority to appoint Deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and as agents of the Elder Board in such positions. Every committee shall have a chairperson, responsible for the overall operation of the committee, who shall be appointed by the Elder Board. The Elder Board may delegate the responsibility for selecting the chairperson to the Deacons or to the committee. (For example, such committees and positions may include a Missions Committee and a Christian Education Committee, among others.)

### Section 2 VOCATIONAL PASTORS AND MINISTERS

- a. Definition. Vocational Pastors are the ordained Elders of the church, who in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the church of Christ. Vocational Ministers are the non-ordained ministers of the church who, in response to God's call, serve the church of Christ as their vocation. Both Vocational Pastors and Vocational Ministers are supported financially by the church in return for their vocational labors.
- b. Duties. In addition to the duties of their office as described in below, Vocational Pastors and Ministers shall perform the duties determined by the Elder Board and approved by the congregation. The duties shall be in writing at the time of the call to service, and substantial changes shall be approved by the church. The church's call of a Vocational Pastor is a call to the Eldership of the church. Therefore Vocational Pastors shall be members of the Elder Board and have all the Biblical qualifications of an Elder. Vocational Ministers are not necessarily called to the Eldership, but as assisting partners in the ministry. Vocational Ministers may, when appropriate, be called by the church to the Elder Board.

- c. Vocational Call by the Church. The members shall call Vocational Pastors and Ministers (1) by ballot upon recommendation of the Elder Board and (2) by at least a three-fourths majority of those members voting at the meeting with at least half of the membership of the Church present. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the next two successive weekends preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.
- d. Termination of Vocational Call by the Church.
  - 1. By resignation. The question of terminating the vocational call of a Vocational Pastor or Minister shall be considered at any time by the church upon the presentation of the Pastor's or Minister's resignation.
  - 2. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against a Pastor or Minister, either due to his preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Elder Board by any two members in good standing, following the procedure prescribed in these By-Laws. If the Elder Board, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of the Pastor or Minister may be terminated at any business meeting upon the recommendation of the Elder Board when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting with at least half of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive weekends next preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.
- e. Licensing and Ordination. In the matter of licensing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, the church shall follow, as far as possible, the procedure recommended by the Elder Board.

### **Section 3 LAY OFFICERS**

- a. Definition. Lay officers are the non-Vocational Elders and Deacons of the Church.
- b. Duties. Lay Elders and Deacons shall have the duties of their offices as described below.
- c. Calling. The Elder Board shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for lay Elder and Deacon. The Elder Board shall provide for individual members of the Church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the Elder Board as candidates for office and for the Elder Board's further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the Elder Board concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee stating the reasons for this conclusion. The Elder Board shall present a ballot of candidates for calling as Elders or Deacons to the congregation at the annual meeting. The Elder Board may also nominate candidates for election to office at any quarterly or special meeting, provided that the written ballot of nominees is available for review in the church office at least ten days in advance of the meeting - and is announced publicly to the church by mail (electronic or otherwise) to its members or in the weekend worship services at least ten days in advance of the meeting. Lay Elders and Deacons shall be called by the Church for a normal term of three years. Calling of a lay Elder or

Deacons shall be by two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at the meeting. Lay Elders shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. Following two consecutive terms the Elder will not serve actively in office for a period of one year. Following this period they are again eligible for nomination as Elder or Deacon. For purposes of this provision a term during which an Elder serves not more than one year shall not be considered a term in office.

d. Removal.

1. Resignation. An officer may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.
2. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an officer of the Church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Elder Board by any two members in good standing, following the procedures prescribed in the By-Laws of this Church. If the Elder Board, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the officer may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Elder Board when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting with at least half of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive weekends next preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

## **Section 4 ELDER BOARD**

- a. Composition, Term, and Calling. The Elder Board shall be composed of men only, both Lay Elders and Vocational Elders. The Elder Board shall be composed of at least three members, with the number of Elders at any time determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the church. There shall be at least twice as many Lay Elders as Vocational Elders. Each Elder shall be called by the membership of the Church to a term of three years.
- b. Qualifications. Elders and nominees for Elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. ([1 Timothy 3:1-7](#); [Titus 1:6-9](#); [1 Peter 5:1-4](#))
- c. Responsibilities. The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church. The responsibilities of the Elders shall include: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant, overseeing the process of Church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings, providing for reporting and recording of official Church business, overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conducting worship services, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church, and mobilizing the Church for world mission.

- d. Organization. The Elder Board shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The Elders must meet at least once per month. Meetings of the Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Elder Board provides otherwise, meetings of the Elder Board may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings of the Elders is defined as at least one-half of the Lay Elders plus at least one-half of the Vocational Elders, except for matters on which only Lay Elders are entitled to vote in which case a majority of the Lay Elders shall constitute a quorum. The Elder Board shall annually select its Chairman and Vice- Chairman from among its Lay Elders.

## **Section 5 DEACONS**

- a. Composition, Term, and Calling. The Deacons may be both men and/or women, both Vocational and Lay Deacons. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men and women in the church. Each Deacon shall be called by the membership of the Church to a normal term of three years. The call and any reaffirmation shall be conducted as provided in these By-Laws.
- b. Qualifications. Deacons and nominees for Deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. ([1 Timothy 3:8-12](#))
- c. Responsibilities. The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include:
  - 1. Administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress
  - 2. The greeting and welcoming ministries of the church
  - 3. Assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel
  - 4. Assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church
  - 5. Caring for and maintaining the Church properties
  - 6. Administering the business affairs of the Church that pertain to its material assets
- d. Organization. The Deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the church. The Elders or the Deacons may designate any specific Deacon or group of Deacons to specialize in some particular Deaconal function. Meetings of the Deacons, or subcommittees thereof shall be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities of the Deacons.

## **ARTICLE III Church Employees**

In addition to Vocational Pastors and Ministers, the church may employ additional personnel. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting. The Elder Board shall be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel.

## **ARTICLE IV Church Finances**

### **Section 1 In General**

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the Church. All funds donated for missions by the societies and organizations of the Church shall pass through the Church Finance Secretary and the Treasurer in order that due record may be made and credit given to the Church. The Deacons shall provide assistants for the Financial Secretary in accounting for funds donated.

### **Section 2 Contributions**

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum. Special offerings may be sought by the Church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Board of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

### **Section 3 Financial Planning**

The financial planning of the Church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out of the various programs of its work. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the Church upon recommendation of the Board of Elders, or, if authorized by the Elder Board, the Deacons or other committee. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay members of the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders may delegate this responsibility provided such delegation is to lay Deacons or other lay members of the Church.

### **Section 4 Accounts**

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Finance Secretary according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Treasurer of the Church shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the Church as detailed in the Budgets or other authorized designations. All moneys for missions shall be remitted in accordance with the Mission Budget of the Church or otherwise designated, preferably each month and not less than each quarter.

### **Section 5 Indebtedness**

No note or contract exceeding 1% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the Church is pledged shall be made except by recommendation of the Board of Elders and approved by the Church.

### **Section 6 Authority to Bind the Church**

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board of Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, the Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

## **ARTICLE V Meetings**

### **Section 1 For Worship**

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the last Sunday of each month or at such other times as the Board of Elders may determine. Other religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the Church may require.

### **Section 2 For Business**

- a. The Annual Meeting. The annual meeting shall be held some time during the last month of the fiscal year of the Church for the purpose of calling and reaffirming the officers, reviewing proposed budgets and other business. Officers called at the annual meeting shall assume their duties at the beginning of the new fiscal year.
- b. Quarterly Meetings. Quarterly meetings of the Church shall be held within the first month of each quarter of the fiscal year.
- c. Special Meetings. The Board of Elders or 5% of the members in good standing may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these By-Laws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on especially important matters not otherwise provided for.
- d. Quorum. Any number of members shall constitute a quorum at any ordinary meeting of the Church. At meetings dealing with particular matters stipulated in these By-Laws, the quorums prescribed shall apply.
- e. Rules Governing Business Meetings. Robert's Rules of Order shall be recognized as the general pattern for the conduct of the business meetings of the Church. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.
- f. Notice Provisions. Unless specifically defined in other sections of these By-Laws or the Constitution, "resident membership" means those members who reside within 75 miles driving distance from the church building, "notice . . . in writing" means a written announcement sent by regular U.S. mail or other electronic means, and "notice . . . from the pulpit" means an oral announcement at each of the worship services.

## **ARTICLE VI Organization of Members for Ministry**

Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the Board of Elders as an official ministry of Silver Lake Baptist Church. Such sanction shall be granted provided that 1) the object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members are consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and 2) the primary officers of the organization are: members of the church or other regular attenders of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Board of Elders. Sanction by the Board of



Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the church.

## **ARTICLE VII Amendments**

Amendments to these By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any quarterly meeting. Amendments shall not be acted on until the following quarterly or annual meeting, at which time an affirmative vote of the majority of the membership of the Church, or a two-thirds majority of those members present at the meeting and voting shall be required for acceptance; provided, however, that at least half of the membership of the Church be present at such meeting, and that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the pulpit on at least two weekends and in writing to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.