

B Y L A W S

Sparta Baptist Church, Sparta, Michigan

PREAMBLE

The Bible admonishes us saying, "Let all things be done decently and in order." To this end, we the members of Sparta Baptist Church, solemnly and sincerely set forth the following Bylaws by which we willingly and cheerfully agree to be governed.

ARTICLE I NAME

This church shall be known as Sparta Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II MISSION, PURPOSES, POWERS, BELIEFS AND ASSOCIATION

Section 1. Mission.

Honoring God, the mission of Sparta Baptist Church is to lovingly bring everyone to new life and maturity in Jesus Christ.

Section 2. Purposes.

(a) WORSHIP - encouraging people to passionately love God with all that they are and have, experiencing His presence through prayer, the Word of God, creative arts, and the ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper.

(b) COMMUNITY - enfolding people into authentic Christian community that is supportive, edifying and missional through small groups and fellowships.

(c) DISCIPLESHIP- empowering people to serve Jesus Christ through Bible teaching, spiritual formation and ministry training.

(d) EVANGELISM - engaging people in the worldwide mission of sharing and reproducing their life in Christ through culturally relevant and redemptive means.

(e) SERVICE- employing wisely the human resources, financial and material God has entrusted to us to accomplish SBC's Mission.

Section 3. Powers.

- (a) To exercise all the loyal powers of a chartered corporation in the State of Michigan.
- (b) To elect officers, hold meetings, and to elect to or dismiss from its membership according to the provision of this document.

Section 4. Beliefs.

- (a) This church declares its adherence to the core beliefs of Sparta Baptist Church.
- (b) This church further declares its adherence to the behavioral patterns outlined in
the Sparta Baptist Church Members' Covenant.

Section 5. Association.

- (a) This church shall be individually independent of any other church or association of churches insofar as control of its affairs is concerned and shall make its own laws as to its membership, discipline of members, and all rules governing its procedure.
- (b) For purposes of fellowship and mutual self-help, this church may associate with other churches or association of churches of like faith and practice.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership.

- (a) Qualifications and Admission.
Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and giving evidence of a change of heart, after having been baptized by immersion, upon recommendation of the Board of Elders and vote of the church will be received into membership. Any believer to be received into membership is expected to adhere to our Core Beliefs and our Members' Covenant.
- (b) Privileges.
All active members, not currently under church discipline, aged sixteen and over shall be eligible for church office under the qualifications listed for that particular office and are eligible to vote at any business meeting of the church.

Section 2. Discipline and Dismissal and Transfer of Members

- (a) Accusations against any member of the church shall be made to the church Board of Elders; and, if circumstances seem to warrant it, keeping

in mind Matthew 18:15-17, the Board of Elders shall bring the matter before the church at any Regular or Special Business Meeting, due notice being given to said member.

- (b) Members absent from the church for a period of six months, except for health reasons, without showing any interest in the church may be placed on an inactive membership list by action of the Board of Elders. By vote of the Board of Elders they may again be recognized as active members. If after six more months they show no more interest in the church, their names will be automatically dropped from the membership roll. It is understood that the Pastor(s) and the Board of Elders will make an earnest effort to communicate with such members before any action is taken.

ARTICLE IV MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship, And Instruction.

(a) The church shall maintain regular Sunday meetings for worship and instruction as well as other meetings as needed.

(b) Communion shall be observed at least once each month.

(c) The Members' Covenant shall be read at every annual meeting.

Section 2. Regular Business.

(a) The Annual Business Meeting of this church shall be held in January. Prior to this meeting, every organization of the church shall submit a written report regarding its activities and fulfillment of duties since the last annual meeting.

(b) Reports shall be made available to members on the final Sunday of April, July and October and business meetings will be scheduled as needed.

(c) All business pertaining to the work of the church shall be transacted at meetings designated for that purpose. However, acceptance of members, and the appointment of delegates may be considered at any meeting when a quorum is present.

(d) The fiscal year of this church shall coincide with the calendar year - January through December.

Section 3. Special Business.

The Senior Pastor, the Board of Elders, or a quorum of members of the church petitioning the Elders in writing, may call special meetings for business. The

notice of the meeting with its purpose shall be read from the pulpit in all services of the preceding two Sundays. The Elders must approve all other petitions.

ARTICLE V. MINISTRIES

Section 1. General.

The ministries of the church may be combined or deleted, and new ministries may be established at the discretion of the Board of Elders to most efficiently fulfill the "Purposes" of Article II, Section 1.

Section 2. Administration.

The Elders shall appoint a leader to each ministry from among the active members.

Section 3. Personnel.

Ministry leaders shall annually present their ministry's voting personnel to the Board for approval. Choices shall be made according to qualifications to match the responsibilities of the ministry. Such personnel may be men or women, and should be scripturally qualified as deacons or deaconesses (I Tim. 3:8-13; Titus 2:3-5). They should preferably, but not necessarily, be church members.

Section 4. Meetings.

Each ministry's personnel shall meet at the call of the ministry leader as necessary for the proper execution of their duties.

Section 5. The Ministries' Organizations and Responsibilities.

- (a) **WORSHIP MINISTRY** - encourages people to corporately experience God's presence and obediently respond to Him by planning, preparing and implementing meetings that evoke worship by exalting God.
- (b) **CONNECTIONS MINISTRY**– enfolds people into active church membership, encouraging their spiritual formation and friendship development through relational activities. It assists guests to become active participants in SBC life through small groups and adult fellowships.
- (c) **DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY** – equips people to grow in serving Jesus Christ through Bible teaching, character development and ministry training.
- (d) **OUTREACH MINISTRY** - engages people as senders, goers, intercessors, givers, welcomers, and connectors in ministries of compassion, evangelism, education, and establishing churches locally and globally. It selects, trains, deploys and supports local volunteers as well as short and long-term missionaries.

(e) **ADMINISTRATION MINISTRY** - manages all staff and daily operation of the church office including the office of church clerk.

(f) **FINANCE MINISTRY** – manages the financial accounts related to the normal operations of the church. This ministry is comprised of the Finance Leader, Financial Secretary, Church Treasurer, and all others necessary to manage the accounts. They will be selected by the ministry and approved by the Elders Board.

The Finance Leader will oversee the cash flow of the church.

The ministry, through the Church Treasurer, will maintain proper accounting records of all receipts, expenditures, and account balances. Monthly reports will be made available to the Elders Board. Current expense balances will be made available to ministry leaders upon request. At least quarterly, the Treasurer will prepare a report of the receipts, expenditures, and the account balance for the members of the Church. Yearly, a budget of receipts and expenditures for the following fiscal year will be prepared and presented to the Church for approval by the members.

The Financial Secretary maintains and records all monies given through the Church envelope system. At the end of each calendar year, a report will be made available to each individual to show the amount given for the year. The Financial Secretary will also coordinate, with the lead Counter, the activities of the Counters. Counters will be selected by the ministry and approved by the Elders Board.

When practical and available, the Finance ministry will select a qualified individual to independently review the finance records and make a report available to the Church as to the adequacy of the accounting records.

(g) **PROPERTY MINISTRY** - manages all Church-owned facilities, equipment and liability insurance programs and coverage. It does so by developing short and long-term maintenance, improvement and replacement programs for them. All non-budgeted repairs, additions, or single-item expenditures will be brought to the Church for approval, where the cost exceeds \$3,000.

The Property will annually review all liability insurance coverage and propose extra-budgetary revisions to the Finance ministry, where necessary to maintain adequate coverage. The adequacy of insurance coverage will annually be reported to the Elders Board.

ARTICLE VI OFFICERS

Section 1.

The officers and directors of this corporation are the Pastors and Elders. The Council Chairman will be the Moderator. The Council Vice-Chairman will be the Moderator in the absence of the Chairman. The Council will appoint an Elder to be the Trustee of this corporation.

Section 2. Pastors

(a) The Senior Pastor shall be a member of the church, the Council of Elders, the Nominating Committee, and ex-officio member of all Ministries. He shall preach and teach the word of God, lead the services of the church, watch over the spiritual welfare of the church along with the Elders, administer the ordinances, model the practical Christian life, direct all pastoral and paid staff and discharge other duties of the pastorate as may be recommended by the Council of Elders.

The Senior Pastor shall be called by a 90% affirmative vote of those church members present and voting at a duly called business meeting of the church.

(b) An Associate or Assistant Pastor shall be called by a 75% affirmative vote of those church members present and voting at a duly called business meeting. The Council of Elders shall have recommended him after a thorough examination as to his qualifications.

(c) The term of office for any Pastor shall continue unless or until the church, or the terminating Pastor gives written notice of termination. Such notice of termination shall be effective sixty days from date of notice or such other effective date as may be agreed on by the Council of Elders and the terminating Pastor. The church may give written notice of termination only after a 75% affirmative vote of those church members present and voting at a duly called church business meeting.

(d) The Pastoral Search Committee shall consist of the Chairman of the Council of Elders and members appointed by the Council from the church membership when there is a need to call a Pastor. The Committee shall recruit and review potential applicants for a pastoral position. Applicants will be recommended to the Council of Elders, who interview and if qualified, recommend the candidate to the church members.

(e) Any additional paid staff shall be approved by the Elders and salary voted on by the congregation.

Section 3. Elders

- (a) The government and executive authority of the church is vested by the members in the Council of Elders to oversee the fulfillment of the "Purposes" in Article II, Section 2.
- (b) The Council of Elders shall consist of the full-time Pastoral Staff and at least twice that number of Elders. Each member of the Council shall be a member of the church qualified according to I Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17-21.
- (c) The appropriate number of Elders shall be determined by the needs of the church. Elders shall be elected to serve indefinitely in an at-large capacity, from which they may be nominated to the Council and elected to serve there according to the provisions of Article VII. Whenever possible one third of the Elders on the council shall be elected at each Annual Business Meeting of the church for a term of three years. Elders may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- (d) The Council shall organize from among themselves after each Annual Business Meeting, appointing an Elder Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary.
- (e) The Elders Council should meet at least once a month to handle appropriate business, at which time Ministry leaders shall submit monthly reports for Elder review.
- (f) Elders may be removed from office if they fail to fulfill the duties or qualifications of that office after being admonished by the Board. Removal is to be by a 75% vote of the Council.
- (g) No organization shall be formed within or sponsored by the church unless the Council has granted approval.
- (h) Methods of raising funds shall be subject to the approval of the Council.

ARTICLE VII ELECTIONS

Section 1. Elections

- (a) The annual election of Elders shall be conducted in conjunction with a special business Meeting at least two months prior to the annual meeting.
- (b) The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Senior Pastor, two Elders appointed by the Board (excluding the Chairman), and two members appointed from the membership no later than April of each year. After

the approval of the nominees by the Council of Elders, the Committee shall prepare a nominating ballot for election of new Elders in a special Business Meeting, with at least one nominee for each vacant Elder's office on the Council.

(c) The nominees for Elder-At-Large and for the Elder Council shall be posted in the church bulletin for six weeks preceding the special Business Meeting called to elect Elders. The election at that meeting shall be by ballot. It is clearly understood that other nominations shall be considered from among the elders-at-large, if submitted in writing to the Nominating Committee four weeks prior to the election. No anonymous nomination will be accepted.

(d) A majority vote of members present and voting is necessary for election to the Elder Council. A vote of 75% of the members present and voting is necessary to elect a man to be an elder-at-large.

Section 2. Vacancies.

For the purpose of filling an Elder's vacated office, special elections may occur at any business meeting, due notice being given to the congregation at least six weeks prior. The Nominating Committee shall submit nominations approved by the Elders to the congregation. Persons elected at special elections shall assume office immediately.

ARTICLE VIII PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

All business shall be conducted in an orderly way, Roberts' Rules of Order, Newly Revised, being the authority for parliamentary procedures not covered in our Core Beliefs, Members' Covenant, or Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX QUORUM

A quorum for all business meetings during the fiscal year is determined by 15% of the active voting membership as reported at the annual business meeting.

ARTICLE X LICENSURE AND ORDINATION

Section 1. Licensure.

Any male member who, in the judgment of the church, gives evidence of his consecration, zeal, and aptness to teach, and is convinced that he is called of God to the work of the ministry, may be licensed by the church to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A two-thirds vote of members present and voting

at a church Business Meeting is required for a license.

Section 2. Ordination.

Any man of unquestionable character, adequate training, scripturally qualified, and spiritually gifted may become a candidate for Ordination. The church at any Business Meeting may call an ordination council of ministers and brethren to examine the candidate. The action to ordain may be referred to the council, which shall, in turn, advise the Elders to proceed or not to proceed with the ordination. The ordination requires a two-thirds vote of members present and voting.

ARTICLE XI DISSOLUTION

In case of dissolution of the Church by the members, the property shall be assigned to the North Central region of the Conservative Baptist Association of America.

ARTICLE XII AMENDMENTS

Our Core Beliefs, Members' Covenant, and Bylaws may be amended or changed at any Business Meeting of the church by a vote of two-thirds of those present and voting, providing previous notice of the change of rules, together with the reading of the new rules, has been given during the church services of the two Sundays preceding the business meeting.