

Memo

To:	FBC Congregation
From:	Board of Elders, First Baptist Church Eugene
Date:	December 20, 2022
Re:	Proposed Changes to Constitution and ByLaws for First Baptist Church of Eugene

Overview

The Elder Board has spent the last several months facing critical decisions in support of our Body's ability to reach our community and the world about the saving grace and message of our Father and Jesus Christ. One of the elements that require adjustment is the Church's foundational rules upon which it is based. These are called the Constitution and ByLaws of First Baptist Church of Eugene ("C&Bs" or "ByLaws"). State law requires all churches and non-profit organizations to adhere to certain state laws concerning their organization, and enacting C&Bs is one of those requirements. It is also a best practice used by churches in the United States and around the world to communicate the foundational principles upon which the church is based and how it will operate and make decisions in the future.

The Elders have reviewed our C&Bs, which were last updated in November 2019, and are recommending changes, subject to an affirmation-vote by the members of the Church. The key changes proposed are summarized as follows:

- **Governance model** – Our congregational-governance model has not changed. Jesus Christ is the head of the church. Governance starts with a team of congregation-affirmed (by vote) and appointed Board of Elders. The C&Bs have been modified to clarify this model and the responsibilities assigned to the Elders by the congregation. The proposed C&Bs provide for a reduction in the required minimum total number of Congregant-Elders & Pastor-Elders from nine to twelve elders (9-12) down to seven to twelve elders (7-12). It should be noted that the Elders are not recommending any changes in the number of Congregant-Elders at the present time.
- **Leadership model** – the November 2019 C&Bs articulated detailed organizational structure and responsibilities of three lead-pastors. C&Bs are intended to be a governing set of rules rather than explicitly defining leadership positions and responsibilities. Moreover, as the Church adapts to changing circumstances, the C&Bs need to provide enough flexibility for those changes. Accordingly, the leadership sections of the C&B have been modified to eliminate a prescribed number of lead-pastors (pastor-elders) and their responsibilities and ministry oversight, leaving those decisions to the Elder Board. The C&Bs expressly indicate, however, that any changes in the leadership model

proposed by the Congregant-Elders will be discussed with the congregation to inform the Congregant-Elders decisions.

- **Vacancy of and filling senior leadership positions** – the C&Bs need to provide guidance on filling vacant leadership positions, but not so restrictive that disallow the Church from filling its needs based on those positions that were vacated. The changes proposed herein provide for overall guidance on filling those positions without being so specific in terms of timing or the process in which those vacancies are filled. The proposed C&Bs maintain that in the case of filling one of the Lead Pastor positions, a committee composed of Church members and Elders will continue to be used to inform the decision to appoint such vacancies. The C&Bs have been modified, by increasing the requirement from 75% approval to 90% approval of voting members when affirming by vote new senior leadership, a Lead-Pastor (aka Pastor/Elder) for example.
- **Other changes** – several other changes have been incorporated to reflect best practices that are consistent with Scripture and to comply with state laws. Three of those changes are:
 - *Indemnification* – providing consistency with state laws and existing practice;
 - *Conflict of interest* – a statement and policy that precludes Elders and staff from taking action that would be in conflict with their position or responsibilities;
 - *Congregational (business) meetings* – a reduction in the number of required participants from 150 to 100 members, which is reflective of a reduction in membership, but will have little practical implication as most congregational meetings, where actions require a vote, take place during Sunday worship services.

The remaining changes are considered administrative in nature and provide greater clarity and consistency with current practices and within the C&B document itself.

Approval Process

As required in the existing C&Bs, any changes to the C&Bs require congregational approval with a vote of not less than two-thirds of members voting. In order to facilitate approval of these C&Bs, the following four-week schedule has been developed. The Board recommends approval of these revised C&Bs, and is interested in seeking input regarding the proposed changes from anyone so inclined.

Date	Action
Thur Dec 22	Email Blast (sign up on bottom of the FBC web-page) announcing proposed C&B amendments, with link to this Elder Exec MEMO
Thur Dec 29	Email Blast with link to Memo, C&B Red-lined and Clean copies
Sun Jan 1	Announcement of C&B changes during Sunday Worship services, and paper copies available.
Sun Jan 8 & Sun Jan 15	Church business meeting 12:00-1:00pm in the Gym. For presentation and discussion of the C&B. Paper copies available.
Sun Jan 29	During both Services: Short Congregational meeting called to order, C&B affirmation ballots distributed and completed by those in attendance. Absentee ballots will be available by Jan 15th at the lobby desk & office.

Thank you, and we look forward to your consideration of these proposed amendments. If you have any questions, please email at elders@fbceugene.com or speak to any of the elders directly.