

Approved August 30, 2022

The Constitution of the Esperanza Baptist Partnership

Preamble

We declare and establish this Constitution to govern the Esperanza Baptist Partnership [hereafter known as "the Partnership"] in an orderly manner as established in 1 Corinthians 14:40, while pursuing its purpose to resource the unique God-given vision of every affiliated congregation in fulfilling the Great Commission and Great Commandment both locally and globally.

Article I- Name and Purpose

Section 1.

The name of this body shall be called the Esperanza Baptist Partnership.

Section 2.

The purpose of the Partnership is to effectively resource the unique God-given vision of every affiliated and autonomous congregation in fulfilling the Great Commission and Great Commandment both locally and globally. The Partnership will administer efforts to accomplish this purpose through four identified areas of cooperation: leadership development, resource connection, pastoral support and mission engagement.

Article II- Membership

Section 1.

The membership of the Esperanza Baptist Partnership will consist of cooperating Baptist churches recognized by the Partnership.

Section 2.

The members are autonomous local churches that cooperate according to like-minded Baptist distinctives. The foundation of our cooperation is the Bible. The faith and practice of the churches of the Partnership shall be in basic harmony with historic Baptist beliefs.

Section 3.

1. The Partnership shall be composed of *messengers* elected by the churches to attend the Annual Celebration in October of each year. Each church shall be entitled to one messenger for each twenty-five resident members. No church shall have less than eight or more than twenty-five elected messengers. Messengers comprise the voting membership of the partnership.

2. Mission churches sponsored by affiliated churches are a part of the primary sponsoring church's membership. Mission church members are entitled to serve as messengers to the Partnership as a part of the delegation of the sponsoring church. The sponsoring church determines its own messengers but is encouraged to include mission church members as a part of their total delegation of messengers.

3. Pastors of all affiliated churches and the elected officers of the Partnership are messengers by virtue of position.
4. Cooperation in the Partnership involves participation in the various meetings of the Partnership and contributing financially to support the purpose of the Partnership.

Section 4. A church may seek to affiliate with the Partnership by presenting a letter of application to the Membership Committee. The committee will determine from the documents received from the petitioning church if that church conforms to the guiding principles of the Partnership and make a recommendation. The church will officially be presented and voted upon by the messengers at the next Annual Celebration.

Article III- Organization

Section 1. Officers. The messengers shall elect four officers; a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer. Officers are nominated by the Executive Committee or by nominations from the floor during the Annual Celebration.

1. The duties of the Moderator.
 - a. The Moderator shall reside over all annual, special called and quarterly Executive Committee meetings.
 - b. The Moderator shall serve as ex-officio member of all committees.
 - c. The Moderator shall appoint the members of the the Finance Committee and the Membership Committee.
 - d. In the event the Moderator is unable to preside over a particular meeting, the moderator may pass the gavel to the Vice-Moderator or appoint another member of the Executive Committee if the Vice-Moderator is also unable to preside.
 - e. The Moderator is responsible for the organization and programming of the Annual Celebration.
2. The duties of the Vice-Moderator.
 - a. The Vice-Moderator is responsible for coordinating communication within the Partnership.
 - b. The Vice-Moderator is responsible for the development of an active annual prayer campaign and prayer ministry within the Partnership.
 - c. The Vice-Moderator shall preside over meetings at the request of the Moderator when the Moderator is unable to preside.
 - d. The Vice-Moderator, in the event the Moderator vacates the position, shall assume the duties of the Moderator to fill the un-expired term appointing a new Vice-Moderator immediately.
3. The duties of the Clerk.
 - a. The Clerk is responsible for keeping accurate records of membership churches in cooperation with the Membership Committee.
 - b. The Clerk is responsible for maintaining registration for attendees to all meetings.
 - c. The Clerk is responsible to record, publish and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings and Annual Celebrations of the Partnership.
 - d. The Clerk serves as an ex-officio member of the Membership Committee.

4. The duties of the Treasurer.

- a. The Treasurer shall receive and disperse all funds belonging to the Partnership according to the process of accountability and annual budget as approved by the Messengers at the Annual Celebration.
- b. The Treasurer must publish an accurate report of accounting for all funds to the Annual Celebration, Executive Committee and the Finance Committee as required.
- c. The Treasurer is required to assist in the development of an Annual Budget.
- d. The Treasurer serves as an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee.

Section 2. Executive Committee.

- a. The Executive Committee consists of one Pastor or designated church member from each affiliated church and the elected officers of the Partnership.
- b. The Executive Committee will meet at least once per quarter. The Annual Celebration will count as a meeting.
- c. The Moderator serves as chairman.
- d. The Executive Committee is responsible for establishing a strategic plan, budget and calendar for the following year of ministry to be presented for vote to the Messengers at the Annual Celebration.
- d. The Executive Committee has the authority to make operational decisions for the Partnership within the boundaries of the strategic plan, budget and calendar as voted on by the Messengers in the interim between Annual Celebrations.
- e. The Executive Committee may create Select Committees as needed.

Section 3. Committees.

- a. The Partnership will maintain two standing committees in addition to the Executive Committee; Finance Committee and the Membership Committee. Each committee should have three members from three different affiliated churches appointed by the Moderator. The term of office is one year.
 1. The Finance Committee is responsible for supervising the Treasurer, establishing a system for financial accountability, and the development of an annual budget for the Partnership to be approved for by the Messengers at the Annual Celebration.
 2. The Membership Committee is responsible for, developing and managing the process of credentials for Messengers, providing examination and recommendation on requests for affiliation from churches and leading in the Messenger registration process at the Annual Celebration.
- b. A Select Committee is a committee formed for a specific purpose. The Executive Committee may create a Select Committees as needed to lead ministry efforts or address administrative needs. The purpose, parameters and longevity of the committee will be determined by the Executive Committee by a simple majority vote. Once the committee is formed, the Moderator is required to appoint members immediately.

Section 4. Trustees.

The Trustees will serve as legal officers and directors of Esperanza Baptist Partnership.

a. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents on behalf of Esperanza Baptist Partnership involving the purchase, sale, mortgage, rental, or transfer of property, or to other legal documents where the signatures of trustees or directors are required. And, as a director of the Partnership, address legal matters on behalf of and by direction of the Messengers of the Partnership.

Section 5. Meetings.

a. Annual Celebration. The Annual Celebration is the primary business meeting for the Partnership that will take place each October and is attended by the elected Messengers of each affiliated churches. The purpose of the conference is to conduct the business of the partnership including approving an annual Strategic Plan, Budget and Ministry Calendar. The Moderator is required to communicate the date, time and location of the Annual Celebration at least six months in advance.

b. Executive Committee Meetings are conducted at least once per quarter but may meet as often as the Moderator calls the meetings with a least thirty days in advance.

c. Emergency Called Executive Committee Meeting. The Moderator may call an emergency meeting of the Executive Committee with only twenty four hours notice if a verbal approval is received by no less than three-fourths of the Executive Committee members.

d. Special Called Conference. The Moderator may call a Special Called Conference for Messengers with approval of three-fourths of Executive Committee and thirty days notice. The conference can only be called for an emergency issue that is beyond the authority of the Executive Committee and can not wait until the next Annual Celebration. The Special Called Conference will be only allowed to address the specific issue requiring a vote from Messengers.

e. Executive Committee meetings, Standing or Select Committee meetings and other general business may be conducted via electronic communication and video conferencing.

f. In the event of a current national crisis or unexpected large scale event that prevents the meeting of the Annual Celebration, the Executive Committee may meet (via video conference if needed) to devise an acceptable plan for alternative conducting of the business of the Partnership. The plan must be approved by three-fourths of all affiliated churches. The Annual Celebration should meet in person if at all possible.

Section 6. Administrative Parameters.

a. The Fiscal Year shall be January 1 through December 31. All elected roles will begin serving on January 1st. The time between the October Annual Celebration

and the new year will provide opportunity for a smooth transition as well as the coordination and training of new leadership.

b. When the constitution, established rules or expected reasoning are silent, the Partnership shall recognize the current edition of Roberts Rules of Order as its operating procedures.

c. The Executive Committee may suspend an individual's leadership role and/or a church's participation within the Partnership temporarily by a three-fourths vote of the Executive Committee. When this occurs, a Special Called Conference is called within thirty days with churches sending their elected Messengers to address only the suspension. The Messengers will vote to *deny* the suspension and restore the individual or church to fellowship within the Partnership or *uphold* the suspension.

Section 7. Affiliations.

The Esperanza Baptist Partnership is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention.

Article IV- Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended at any Annual Meeting of the Esperanza Baptist Partnership by a two-thirds vote of the messengers present and voting. Proposed amendments shall first be presented to the Executive Board for recommendation to the Annual Celebration.

Article V- Assets

Section 1. If at any time, the Messengers of the Esperanza Baptist Partnership agree to dissolve the organization, the assets or moneys acquired will go to a 501(c)(3) of like minded Baptist organization selected according to a three-fourths vote of the Messengers.