



Bylaws
Second Slavic Baptist Church

Sacramento, California, USA

1998 2.



1. General Guidelines

- 1.1. A member of the church can be any person who believes in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and their own personal Savior, who made the conscious act of repentance and accepted holy water baptism through faith in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- 1.2. The foundation of our faith is the Bible as the only, full, and lawful revelation of God to man. 66 books of the Bible are the Word of God.
- 1.3. The church can be part of an association, at the same time keeping its independence when it comes to decisions within the church.
- 1.4. The church can have its own branches or divisions.

2. Activities of the Church

- 2.1. The church is a voluntary gathering of second-born people of the Evangelic Baptist doctrine, gathered for the fulfillment of their spiritual needs, preaching of the Word, and for achieving holiness and Christian piety.
- 2.2. For the nurturing of the members of the church and for their spiritual growth, the church organizes church services, Sunday school for all ages, children's camps, Bible study groups, choirs, orchestras, the library, sound and video studios, family and church trips, camps, and outings.
- 2.3. The church can organize missions and lead women's ministries, youth ministry, and other groups. The regulations of these groups cannot contradict the current Bylaws of the church and must be approved by the membership during a membership meeting.
- 2.4. The church can have missionaries, evangelists, and other ministers, and also support their work financially as well as spiritually. The church can provide help to the poor, the needy, those who are victims of natural disasters, also in building of houses of prayer (churches). The church can help community or government organizations. The church can do this in their country as well as abroad.
- 2.5. The quantity of missionaries and other ministers is confirmed at membership meetings. Financial support must be confirmed at the annual membership meeting and spent depending on the incoming donations for these needs.
- 2.6. The church can have specific budgets: missionary, Sunday school, to the needy, etc. These funds are apportioned by the Elder Board of the church for these specific purposes. If the need arises, the church

3. Members of the Church. Association. Responsibilities and Discipline.

- 3.1.** Anyone who comes from another Evangelic Baptist church and wants to become a member of our church must declare their decision at any church service or in an individual conversation with the pastor of the church. The application must be submitted in writing.
- 3.2.** All candidates for church membership are informed of the order, organization, and ministry of the church. Those who fully agree with our Bylaws are accepted as members of the church at a membership meeting, after reading of the supporting letter from their original church. Those who come without a supporting letter can be accepted as members provisionally. After receiving an answer from their original local church, they become full/equal members of the church. If their original local church does not answer within a year of our request, such candidates can be accepted as members of the church based on their lives. Provisionally accepted members cannot be selected for ministry and cannot vote.
- 3.3.** Acceptance into church membership is a confirmation that the newly accepted person agrees with the current Bylaws and promises not to violate them. The same applies to those being baptized.
- 3.4.** Members of the church must:
- Live in accordance with the Word of God
 - Actively participate in the life of the church
 - Care and pray for the spiritual health of the church and their family
 - Be at peace with all brothers and sisters
 - Regularly attend all church services
 - Be exemplary citizens of their country
 - Keep with the order and schedule of various church services and procedures set for worshipping
- 3.5.** Changes in the schedule of church services can be made at membership meetings; temporary changes in schedule can be made as needed without the approval at a membership meeting.
- 3.6.** All members of the church must participate financially. All financial needs of the church are met through donations of the members of the church or any others wishing to donate.
- 3.7.** The church has the right to deny acceptance into church membership. Members of the church cannot be idolaters, fornicators, thieves, drunkards, murderers, drug addicts, cult members, men who wear earrings, homosexuals, lesbians, transsexuals, bisexuals, anyone practicing any other form of intimate relationship except those postulated by God: in the unity of marriage between one man (from birth) and one woman (from birth) (Genesis 2:18-25, Romans 1:24-32, Galatians 5:19-21, 1st Corinthians 6:9-10, 1st Corinthians 7:2)¹.
- 3.8.** According to the Bible (Genesis 1:27-28), marriage is instituted by God. The church acknowledges that marriage is a unity of one man (from birth) and one wom-



an (from birth) who unite in a lawful spousal relationship. Marriage is united by prayer and the laying of the hands of the pastor over the man (from birth) and the woman (from birth) - members of the church who truly love the Lord and each other and who desire to become a family.

According to biblical principles and in accordance with the constitutional rights of our country about the freedom of religion, the church and our pastors, ministers, and workers do not participate in the teaching, counseling, or blessing of same-sex relationships or marriages.

In accordance with current church Bylaws, the church building, property, territory, or resources cannot be used for such events.

- 3.9.** Members of the church who move away have the right to request a support letter in order to become a member of a local Evangelic Baptist church in their new community.
- 3.10.** Membership meetings are gathered no more than once every three months. A special meeting, as the need arises, can be called sooner by the request of the Elder Board or senior pastor of the church. Reporting and election membership meetings happen once a year before the 1st of February.
- 3.11.** Every church member has the right to speak at a membership meeting on an agendized topic to express agreement or disagreement. Such a speech should not be provocative in nature. Persons who disrupt the order of the gathering and do not follow protocol lose the right to vote. If the violation is repeated, the member will incur church punishment. All speeches will be carried out in order and only with the allowance of the chair of the meeting. Repeated speeches can be allowed by the membership.
- 3.12.** Any suggestions regarding the changes in the order and rules of church services, renovations or reconstructions of the church building, any serious need for improvement, must first be submitted in writing to the Elder Board of the church and after their review can be brought to a membership meeting.
- 3.13.** Double membership is not allowed.

4. Church Punishments and their Removal

- 4.1.** Any church member who violates biblical principles of moral, family, community, or church life or Bylaws of the church is subject to church punishment.
- 4.2.** Issues of church discipline are the purview of the Elder Board of the local church. God put the burden of responsibility for helping those in need of correcting on the ministers (Ephesians 4:11-15, Galatians 6:1-2). A member of the church who acts in defamation of themselves or the church that qualify as sin according to the Holy Scriptures and does not repent in these acts nor ceases to commit them, such a person must be subject to church punishment.
Measures of church discipline are exhortation, denunciation, reprimand, and excommunication (1st Timothy 1:5, 2nd Timothy 2:25-26, 4:2-4, 2nd Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15, 1st Corinthians 5:6-13). Exhortation and denunciation can happen one-on-one or in the presence of the church membership. Reprimand and excommunication are discussed at the Elder Board and then the corresponding decision of the board is communicated to the church membership at the soonest church



membership meeting with the explanation of the gist of the sin that became the reason for such church punishment. The decision of the Elder Board is the decision of the church. Reprimand can last 3 to 6 months as the Elder Board deems fit. If during that time the member repents and corrects their actions, the Elder Board can decide to cease the punishment and reinstall the person as a rightful member of the church. If the correction did not happen, such a person is excommunicated from the church, and that decision is announced to the church.

- 4.3.** Violations of biblical principles include slander, lies, foul language, evil talk, outrage, drunkenness, smoking, drug addiction, fornication, adultery, divorce, abortion, pornography, tattooing (Leviticus 19:28), spiritualism and occultism (Deuteronomy 18:9-12), same sex marriage and other sexual obscenities (Leviticus 18:22-30, Romans 1:26-32), also marriage with persons of non-Evangelic Baptist doctrine or those who openly oppose it (Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 4:31)².
- 4.4.** Anyone who disrupts the peace in the church, especially those who cause divisiveness is subject to church punishment.
- 4.5.** A renewed acceptance or the removal of church punishment can happen in the case of repentance and correction of sinful ways, and only when the church is assured in the sincerity of repentance. A renewed acceptance can happen no earlier than 3 months after correction.
- 4.6.** Not participating in holy communion three months in a row without a serious reason is not allowed. Those not participating must explain their reasons or they may lose their church membership (Numbers 9:13, Acts 2:42).
- 4.7.** Church punishment or cessation of such as well as the names of church members subject to them must be announced at membership meetings and recorded in the meeting minutes.
- 4.8.** Accusations of the pastor can be accepted in the presence of two or three witnesses (Timothy 3:15).

5. Leadership of the Church

- 5.1.** The supreme decision-making body of the church is the membership meeting. Decisions of this body applies to all members of the church.
- 5.2.** In accordance with the Word of God, for the provision of the every day life of the church, God anoints ministers in the church: pastors, deacons, evangelists, teachers, who are elected by the church. All other ministries can be carried out by persons appointed by the senior pastor in consultation with the Elder Board.
- 5.3.** For leadership of all types of church ministry the church elects a senior pastor with a minimum of two thirds of the votes of those present at the election membership meeting.
 - 5.3.1.** The election membership meeting is legitimate if it was announced no later than 2 weeks in advance³.
 - 5.3.2.** Reporting election membership meetings are gathered annually. A decision is accepted if it was voted on by the majority of those members of the church who are present and participating in the election membership meeting.

5.3.3. Once every 4 years, a reporting election membership meeting is held for the confirmation of the responsibilities of the senior pastor and all members of the Elder Board. The decision is accepted if it was voted on by at least two thirds of church members who are present and participating in the election membership meeting⁴.

- 5.4.** The senior pastor is accountable to the church in all his actions. He is responsible for all church services. He leads all church services, performs all spiritual requirements and is a spiritual mentor and leader of the church.
- 5.5.** The senior pastor is responsible for the spiritual wellbeing of the church. He is responsible for and has the right to visit church members in their homes, inquire about their personal lives, as well as teach, exhort, reprimand, and suggest measures of church punishment or its cessation.
- 5.6.** Reasons for the removal or firing of the senior pastor include falling into sin, deviation into heresy, health conditions, or voluntary (2nd Peter 2:1).
- 5.7.** For the successful ministry of the senior pastor, the church elects deacons as his helpers. By the decision of the church, the deacons must be anointed (praying and laying of hands) (Acts 6:5-6).
- 5.8.** For clerical work, the church elects a secretary. He records meeting minutes of membership meetings, record of church members, and conducts all clerical tasks.
- 5.9.** For accounting work, the church elects a treasurer and collectors of donations as his/her helpers. The treasurer leads all accounting documentation, deposits funds into the bank and carries out all financial operations. The treasurer submits their written financial report that is reviewed and signed by members of the revision committee and presents to the church membership during the annual reporting church membership meeting. The report, after being accepted by the church, is signed by the senior pastor and the church secretary. During the period between church membership meetings, the treasurer is accountable to the senior pastor and the Elder Board.
- 5.10.** For domestic work, the church elects or appoints an administrator and helpers who are responsible for the wellbeing of the church building and all church property. In between church membership meetings, these persons are accountable to the Elder Board.
- 5.11.** For the auditing and control of all financial and domestic actions of the leadership, the church elects or appoints a revision committee of 3 persons who once a year complete a full revision of documents and compile a report.
- 5.12.** The leadership and responsibility for all ministries between church membership meetings lies with the Elder Board that is led by the senior pastor. The Elder Board includes the senior pastor, secretary, deacons, and administrator.
- 5.12.a.** The widened Elder Board includes all persons listed in 5.12 as well as preachers, choir/orchestra conductors, Sunday school director, youth leader, and leaders of other ministries.
- 5.13.** Existing departments of the church such as women's ministry, youth groups, Sunday school, choirs and orchestras - must have rules not contradictory to the church Bylaws. Leadership for these departments is elected during their corre-

sponding meetings with the required presence of the senior pastor or one of the deacons. The reporting and elections meetings of these departments must be conducted before the all-church annual reporting and election meeting. Leaders of these departments are accountable to the Elder Board of the church and their financial activities are reviewed by the revision committee of the church.

- 5.14.** Any ministry regarding the leadership of the church must be led exclusively by members of the church who have tenure of membership at the church for no less than a year. If a minister is specifically invited, a trial period must be discussed. Church punishments automatically take away the right to ministry. Reintegration into ministry is decided on by the church.
- 5.15.** Members of the church who have dangerous illnesses such as AIDS, epilepsy, tuberculosis, etc. cannot claim a ministry role, especially with children.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1.** Meeting minutes and financial reports, signed by the treasurer and approved at the church membership meetings, are considered valid after being signed by the senior pastor and the secretary of the church.
- 6.2.** All church documents as well as checks can be signed by persons approved by the Elder Board of the church.
- 6.3.** Current Bylaws are not considered perfect nor complete. They are subject to change and additions according to Bylaw 3.12 and by approval at church membership meeting.
- 6.4.** Current Bylaws have been approved by the church membership at the church membership meeting on July 13th, 1997.

1 - Amendment approved at the membership meeting on January 31st, 2016.

2 - Amendment approved at the membership meeting on February 22nd, 2015.

3 - Amendment approved at the membership meeting on January 31st, 2016.

4 - Amendment approved at the membership meeting on January 27th, 2008.