Constitution of
South Main Baptist Church
Houston, Texas

Preamble

In 1903 our predecessors in Christ gathered together to establish South Main Baptist Church as a body of Christians dedicated to the belief in Jesus as Lord, the priesthood of the believer, and the acceptance of believers as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Throughout our history, this congregation has continued to adhere to the doctrines that the founders of South Main Baptist Church consistently espoused: to live and grow according to the principles of the Bible; to instill in our children and grandchildren the Christian spirit and values that will enable them to live righteously; to teach, learn and grow as Christians as we travel life's journey; and to spread the Word of God to our neighbors and our neighbor's neighbor. In furtherance of these goals our Church fosters an environment of religious freedom and tolerance, reconciliation, faithfulness, and Christian love without regard to a person's sex, race, nationality, station or faith background. These principles have always been, and are today, the bedrock of Christ's Church. Those of us at South Main Baptist Church who gather in the name of the Lord strive to use these concepts to create a living Church – one in which spiritual growth is nurtured, one in which the community of Christians is foremost and one in which the Holy Spirit is always present. We, the Members of South Main Baptist Church, shall continue in the years to come to reaffirm these commitments and gather together with God through Christ who taught us:

> "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."
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> Matthew 22:37–40

As we reaffirm in this Constitution our commitment to Christ and to each other, we also pledge ourselves and our Church to love and minister to our community and to the world. Christ has directed us to be more than followers of His ways. We are to be disciples of His Word.

> "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."
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> Matthew 28:18–20

We shall always strive, as has the Church historically done, to welcome all who wish to learn about the Word of God.

This Constitution, while legal in its nature, unites us in spirit and in word to share in God's light, to promote the values of Christ, to spread the Word of God and to give renewed life to the principles of our predecessors and to pass those on to the generations which will follow us. We ask that God bless our Church and pray that we be Christ's people, reflecting His light and growing God's Kingdom.

> Amen.

Article I

The name of this Church shall be South Main Baptist Church.

This Church is authorized under the warrant of the Holy Scriptures, and is incorporated under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Texas. It shall have no capital stock and is not organized for material or pecuniary profit.

The office and principal place of business of this Church shall be at its Church campus in the City of Houston, Harris County, Texas.

Article II
Purpose

United by the Grace of God in Christian love, experience and doctrinal belief, the members of this Church recognize and receive Jesus Christ as Supreme Lord and Savior and the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God. The Members of this Church agree to accept the Bible as their guide of faith and practice, to adhere to the doctrines and teachings of the New Testament, and to recognize no obligation of religion or of conscience unless in accord therewith.

The purpose of this Church is:

First: The maintenance of the worship of God and the observance of the Christian ordinances;

Second: The study of the Scriptures, Christian principles, the deepening of spiritual commitment to personal and corporate witnessing, prayer life and mission activity, and the practice of the Christian life as revealed and taught in the New Testament;

Third: The salvation of the lost at home and abroad;

Fourth: The promotion and advancement of Christ's Kingdom throughout the earth.

Article III
Membership

The Membership of this Church shall consist of persons who have made a public confession of their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord; who have expressed their desire to be numbered among His disciples in this Church; who are in sympathy with and subscribe to the faith and practices of this Church; who have experienced believer’s baptism by this Church or by a church of like faith and order; and who shall have been received into its fellowship by affirmation of the congregation in open meeting.

The Covenant of this Church into which its Members enter most solemnly and joyfully is as follows:

> As members of this community of faith who have joined together in this time and place to worship God and care for one another, we celebrate God's grace and affirm our calling to:
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> Share and reflect God's blessings by ministry to each other and our neighbors in the name of Jesus Christ;
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> Love justice and mercy and be faithful in all relationships;
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> Embrace the responsibility of all individuals to express their convictions as we work together to fulfill God's mission;

Nurture faith and support the spiritual growth of ourselves and our families;

Faithfully and cheerfully support this church's mission with our prayers, our service, our attendance and our gifts; and

Cooperate with other faith communities who are also striving to further God's purposes in the world.

The Church may also elect to bring persons who have accepted Christ as their personal Savior under the watch care of the Church when such person is attending this Church and for some special circumstance does not believe that he or she is ready to become a member of this Church, as for example, when a student will be in the locality a limited time.

The Church shall have the sole right to determine qualifications for Membership. The Church may discipline its Members by reprimand or by exclusion from fellowship a member who by word or practice declares that he or she can no longer subscribe to the faith and practices of the Church as previously covenanted. Withdrawal of Membership should always be a measure of last resort and shall have been preceded by sincere, loving and unsuccessful efforts by the pastor and other Members to restore the faith and earlier commitment of the person embodied in the above Covenant made by such person at an earlier time, always recognizing that no one is able to fully live wholly in accord with the Covenant honestly made.

Article IV
Church Government

This Church is an independent, self-governing body which we believe to have been conceived by Jesus Christ Our Lord and practiced by the Apostles and the New Testament churches. In accordance with Baptist polity, this Church recognizes no control explicit or implied by any other ecclesiastical body or person, acknowledging only the over-lordship of Christ and the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The government of this Church shall be in the hands of its Members, a priesthood of believers, each with equal suffrage, all powers and privileges being derived from its congregational body. Any authority or privilege granted, or task or duty assigned, shall be at the will of the Church and shall in no sense be construed as irrevocably vesting such power or privilege in any individual, committee or organization. Powers so granted shall be only such as necessary to the performance of the duty or task assigned. The officers of the Church as provided in Article V shall be elected by and accountable only to the Church.

This Constitution and the By-Laws or other rules which shall be made in pursuance thereof, shall be the supreme law of this Church but subject always to conformity with the Holy Bible, and every member of this Church shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution, By-Laws, or rules of any other organization within or without the Church to the contrary notwithstanding.

Interpretation of the meaning and intent of this Constitution and of the By-Laws shall be the privilege but not the prerogative of the diaconate. Any member dissatisfied with such interpretation, however, shall have the right to appeal to the Church in regular business meeting and the decision there reached shall be final and binding.

The business of the Church shall be transacted at business meetings open to all Members of the Church. Also, meetings of the diaconate and of committees shall be open to the attendance by Members of the Church unless the diaconate or such committee declares itself to be in executive session. The situations in which the diaconate or a committee may declare itself to be in executive session shall be the exception rather than the rule, and shall be defined in the By-Laws.

Article V
Officers and Committee Members

The pastor, ministers, deacons and committee members shall be Members of this Church and shall be servants of the Church. In selecting the pastor, ministers and deacons, the Church should seek persons who have demonstrated their strong commitment to Christ and His service and have the scriptural characteristics and ideas embodied in the purposes and principles of the Bible and this Constitution. The pastor and ministers should profess and exhibit a love of Christ, a dedication to the Holy Scripture as the Word of God and the background, training and maturity of spirit and compassion which will enable each of them to guide, encourage and educate the congregation in the ways of the Lord. The organizational officers of the Church shall be the pastor, clerk, treasurer, historian and trustees, with such other positions as may be required to accomplish more efficiently its stated purpose and mission. The number, manner of election, terms of office, duties of office and compensation (if any) of the pastor, ministers, and officers shall be determined by the Church.

As its needs may require, the Church shall create positions on the Church staff for the efficient operation of its program.

Certain special functions of this Church shall be performed through Committees, general, special, and otherwise, each with definite duties and limitations of authority as established by the Church.

Article VI
Meetings

The meetings of the Church shall be as follows:

1. Services of worship which shall be held each Sunday morning at such times as the Members may approve, and may be held on other days or at other times on Sunday at the discretion of the Members;
2. Special worship services (revivals, Holy Week, etc.) shall be held as authorized by the By-Laws;
3. Mid-Week worship services shall generally be held as authorized by the By-Laws;
4. Business Meetings shall be held as provided in the By-Laws, provided that regular business meetings shall be held no less than quarterly.

One hundred Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business except as otherwise provided in this Constitution. In the absence of a quorum, the assembly shall have the power only to adjourn to a day certain and continue to adjourn until a quorum be present.

In the absence of the vote of two-thirds of the Members present, the pastor shall be the moderator of the business meetings of the Church, except that in his absence or inability to serve or expressed desire not to serve (for all or any part of the meeting), the chairman of the diaconate shall serve as the moderator; in the event both the pastor and the chair of the diaconate are absent, unable to serve or have expressed the desire not to serve for a particular business meeting, as for example, when there arises a personal or conflicting interest of such persons in a matter to come before the Church for discussion or action, a majority of the Members present shall elect a moderator pro-tempore.

These meetings shall take precedence over any and all meetings, programs, and the like of any organization within or without the Church.

Article VII
Fiscal Policy

The financial needs of this Church, its organizations, and causes fostered by it, shall be supported by voluntary, free gifts to the Church.

The Scriptural mode of church finance shall be not less than the tithe.

No debt commitment, or other obligation shall be created except by specific authority of the Church.

All property, both real and personal, all monies, all equities and the like shall be received, held and controlled by the Church, or by any entity designated by the Church, and may be used, transferred, pledged, invested, given, or sold only as authorized by the Church as limited by Article XIV.

All disbursements of monies shall be made only on authority of the Church.

The compensation of all compensated officers and employees of and other designated persons performing services to the Church shall be set by the Church either directly or by delegation of specific authority to a Committee or Committees. The Church shall keep books of account of all funds received into and disbursed from the Treasury; shall deposit such funds as soon as possible after receipt in the name of the Church in a bank subject to state or national supervision and approved by the Church; and shall submit all books, records, and support documents for audit at such times as the Church shall direct.

Article VIII
Organizations Within of the Church

The Church shall organize itself into departments, committees, ministries, etc. to best accomplish its purposes and mission.

No individual or group of individuals shall institute or form any organization or group purporting to be aligned with this Church promoting any plan or ideal except upon the express authority of the Church.

Article IX
Ordinances

The ordinances of the Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These ordinances are observed periodically in accordance with the Scripture as acts of believers in Christ to acknowledge symbolically and to recall Christ's example of divine love in His sacrificial death, burial and resurrection.

The ordinance of Baptism shall be by immersion of the professed believer in water in obedience to the command of Christ and shall be administered on the authority of and in the presence of the Church. The ordinance shall be administered by the pastor or by another minister of this Church or other Christian Church to whom the pastor of this Church delegates the duty. In special circumstances, as for example when health or other physical reasons make immersion in the presence of the Church impractical, the ordinance of Baptism may be administered in such mode and at such time and place as may be appropriate under the circumstances.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at a worship service with such frequency as the Church shall determine. All Members of this Church and other Christians may participate. The pastor, a Church minister or a deacon designated by the pastor, or, in the pastor's absence, the chair of the diaconate shall preside at the table and shall be assisted by the deacons and / or the pastor. In the

pastor's absence or inability to preside or so designate, or when the Church shall be without a pastor, the chair of the diaconate shall so preside or designate the person to preside. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper may be held at other times and places and pursuant to such conditions as the pastor may determine.

Article X
Licensing and Ordaining

Members of the Church who request the Church to license them for the exercise of their gifts in the ministry and have advised the Church that they feel called of God to the work of the ministry, and have by piety, zeal, and aptness to serve given evidence that they are called of God to the work of the ministry may be licensed to the Christian ministry by the Church, by a vote of a majority of the Members present and voting at any business meeting.

Any member of this Church who has received a call to become a minister and believes that he or she has the qualifications to become a minister may make written request for this Church to ordain him or her as a minister. The candidate shall present the request at a business meeting. If the Church by a vote of a majority of the Members present and voting at the business meeting determines that the approval process should begin, the Members shall authorize and direct the pastor to assemble an Examining Council composed of Members of this Church. The Council shall inquire of the candidate as to the candidate's call and qualifications for ministry. The Council shall, if it determines it to be necessary, make other inquiries. The Council shall then vote to recommend to the Church that it accept or deny the request. If the Council recommends acceptance, the recommendation shall be presented to the Church at a business meeting. If the recommendation is accepted by the Church, the pastor (or in the event of a vacancy in the pastor's position, the chair of the diaconate) shall arrange for a ceremony for ordaining that person to the Gospel ministry in the name of and in the presence of the Church. If the Council decides to recommend that the request should not be accepted, the person making the request shall be given the opportunity to withdraw the request, in which case the matter will be considered closed without further Church action or consideration. If, however, the person does not withdraw the request, the Council shall report at a business meeting, and the Members shall take such action as the Members deem appropriate.

If the Church at a regular business meeting shall elect a Member or Members to the office of Deacon, it shall authorize and direct the pastor to assemble an Ordaining Council which shall be composed of Members of this Church, including deacons, ordained Ministers of the Gospel of like faith and order and of visiting deacons of like faith and order. An appropriate hour of worship shall be planned, during which the new deacons shall be ordained to service.

Article XI
Cooperation

This Church shall cooperate voluntarily with other Baptist churches of like faith and order through conventions, associations, and the like, organized for and devoted to the propagation of the Gospel, religious education, healing the sick, benevolence, or any other effort for bringing in and advancing the Kingdom of God.

This cooperation may be manifest (a) by contributing money through the regular treasuries of such organizations or directly to the causes fostered by them; (b) by electing and sending Messengers to participate in their deliberations; (c) by the services of its pastor and Members, when invited so to do as officers upon Boards, Committees and the like; and (d) by adopting at a business meeting, if the Church

deems proper, such recommendations or actions as may have been made or taken by the convention, association or like organization.

This Church may make common enterprise with other churches, denominations and institutions in the promotion of moral, benevolent and religious causes. In such cooperation, however, this Church shall retain its full independence of action and government and shall not surrender any of its doctrine, prerogative, power, or sovereignty.

Article XII
By-Laws

The Church shall adopt By-Laws to give practical effect to this Constitution, which shall be in every particular subject to and in harmony with the letter and intent of this Constitution.

Article XIII
Amendments

This Constitution adopted by the Church in regular business meeting held January 26, 2025, shall supersede all prior resolutions, precedents, and actions of the Church not in harmony with its provisions.

This Constitution may be amended by a vote of three-fourths of the Members present and voting at a regular business meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at a previous regular business meeting and not less than sixty (60) days shall have intervened between such business meeting and the final consideration.

The By-Laws may be amended as provided in the By-Laws, provided that any amendment shall require at least the vote of a majority of the Members attending a duly called and constituted business meeting.

Article XIV
Church Dissolution

This Church pledges its assets for use in performing its religious functions. On discontinuance of this Church by dissolution or otherwise, the assets shall, so far as is reasonably practicable as determined by the Church, be transferred to a religious organization that has the same purposes as described in this Constitution for this Church such as organizations affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or the Southern Baptist Convention, and that is qualified for an exemption authorized by the exemption provisions of the Internal Revenue Code and the Texas Property Tax Code. The discontinuance of the Church and the transfer of assets to such religious organization shall be approved and authorized by three fourths (3/4ths) of the Members of this Church present and voting at a business meeting following the mailing of written notice of the purpose of the meeting including among other things the name of the proposed grantee. The initial resolution to discontinue the Church and/or transfer its assets must be offered at a business meeting not less than thirty (30) days after written notice has been given to Members of the Church at the last address shown on the records of the Church of the intent to offer the resolution to initiate the process of discontinuance of the Church or transfer of its assets by giving of notice of the meeting where the vote of the Membership of the Church will be taken. If the resolution to discontinue the Church or transfer the assets and to give notice of a date of a business meeting to consider and vote upon the matter is approved by the Members for further consideration, a written notice shall be mailed to the Members of the Church at the last address, if any, shown on the records of the Church not less than sixty (60) days before the date of the business meeting at which the resolution seeking Church authorization will be presented. This notice shall contain a copy of the

proposed resolution and a brief summary of resolution. The numerical failure, inadvertent or otherwise, to send such notice to less than three (3) % of the Church Membership as then reflected by the Church records shall not invalidate the vote at the business meeting referred to in the notice on the proposal for the discontinuance of the Church and/or sale of its assets.

Article XV
Safekeeping and Availability of Copies of the Constitution and By-Laws To the Membership of the Church

Each of three identical complete official copies of this Constitution and the By-Laws, together with all amendments thereto, shall be kept in separate places: (1) by the Clerk, one with the other important records which the Church will keep under lock and key with limited access as provided in the By-Laws; (2) in the Church office so as to be readily available for use by Church Members; and (3) in the Church Library. The Church shall supply a copy to any member upon request of the member.

The undersigned, being the duly appointed Clerk of the Church, hereby certifies that the foregoing Constitution was adopted on January 26, 2025, at a duly called and constituted meeting of the Members of the Church.

Jeannie L Chambers
Signature

May 19, 2025
Date

By: Jeannie Chambers
Printed Name

Its: Clerk