

Dixie Lee Baptist Church
Bylaws Team
**Responses to Comments on The Proposed 2025 Constitution and Bylaws
Amendment**

Introduction

The comment period for the 2025 proposed amendment to the Church's Constitution and Bylaws ran from July 27 to August 20, 2025. Comments were submitted electronically through the Church's website or in writing by completing a comment card available to the Church members. The Bylaws Team also conducted three information sessions on August 3, August 13, and August 17. Participation in the comment period were:

- 72 people attended the information sessions.
- 2 written comments on the Bylaws was submitted through the comment card process.
- Electronic comments were submitted on 3 sections of the Constitution from 2 people.
- Electronic comments were submitted on 9 sections of the Bylaws from 5 people.

The following are the verbatim comments submitted by section and the Bylaws Team's responses. The comments remain in the sections as submitted even if the comment isn't germane to the topic in the section. This document addresses those comments received through the website and written process prescribed by the church. In several cases a lengthy comment was summarized into topics and each topic individually addressed.

Highlighted sections indicate a commitment to revise the draft Proposed Amendment and is reflected in the final draft Proposed Amendment to be voted on at the September 21 meeting.

CONSTITUTION

Preamble, I., Name

Comment (This comment was submitted with 4 specific sections and a response for each is provided)

To the Elders and Constitution & Bylaws Committee of Dixie Lee Baptist Church,

I am writing to express my concerns with portions of the proposed Amended and Restated Constitution and Bylaws dated July 15, 2025. My intent is not to create division but to encourage reflection on how these policies align with Scripture and how they will be received by our members, visitors, and the community we seek to reach.

1. Restricting Women from Serving as Elders While Allowing Them as Deacons

The proposed bylaws interpret 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 in a way that bars women from serving as elders, citing the "husband of one wife" language as exclusive to men. Yet the same wording appears in the deacon qualifications (1 Timothy 3:12) but is interpreted more flexibly there to allow women to serve. This inconsistency raises questions about whether the interpretation is truly consistent or selectively applied.

Theologically, this approach risks undercutting the biblical teaching that all believers are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the church (1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 3:28). Practically, it may send the message that women's leadership and teaching gifts are less valued. In today's cultural climate—especially among younger generations—this could be perceived as inequitable and rooted more in tradition than in the whole counsel of God's Word. Such a perception will almost certainly alienate some current members, deter potential members, and create unnecessary barriers to the gospel for those we seek to reach.

Response:

The 2018 Bylaws and this proposed amendment do not directly address the gender of the deacons. The 2018 Constitution and Bylaws both invoke the SBC Faith and Message 2000 as the statements of belief for Dixie Lee Baptist Church (DLBC). This proposed amendment does not change that but rather incorporates directly each of the position statements contained in the SBC Faith and Message 2000. Article VI, The Church, of the SBC Faith and Message says "Its (the church) scriptural officers are pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture." This position statement only directly addresses gender for the office of pastor/elder/overseer. While the SBC position statement does not directly prohibit women from serving as deacons, the final determination of whether women will serve at DLBC as deacons rests with the active members of DLBC. If DLBC decides it needs a Board of Directors that provides strategic oversight and governance of the church's activities to ensure it is fulfilling its mission and goals, then that position would be an overseer/elder-type role as defined in scripture. See the response to comment 4 under Section 7.1, Management of the Church, for more discussion regarding governance of the church and the rationale for realigning the Board of Directors' duties and responsibilities.

2. Inconsistency in Applying "Husband of One Wife"

The proposed changes would use the "husband of one wife" requirement to bar women from serving as elders, but in practice we have allowed men in leadership who have had more than one wife—whether through divorce and remarriage or other circumstances. This creates a troubling inconsistency: the standard is applied strictly to exclude women but is not equally enforced among men. Such selective application undermines the credibility of the policy and raises doubts about whether it is rooted in Scripture or in human preference.

Response:

The 2018 Bylaws and the 2025 proposed amendment do not cite any scriptural references to "the husband of but one wife" to justify the involvement or exclusion of women in service to the church. DLBC stated its affirmation of the SBC Faith and Message 2000 in the 2018 Bylaws. Article VI, The Church, of the SBC Faith and Message 2000 says "Its (the church's) scriptural officers are pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as

qualified by Scripture.” It is silent on the application of the requirement stated in the comment. The interpretation of the scripture regarding the “husband of one wife” (some translations) and its application in the election of officers to serve the church is within the autonomous prerogative of SBC churches and DLBC members determine how to apply that passage for offices of leadership under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The passage does not apply to the office of pastor/elder/overseer for the purposes of gender selection to that position because the SBC position statement clearly takes the scriptural position that the office of pastor/elder/overseer is restricted to men. If the church decides it needs a Board of Directors that provides strategic oversight and governance of the church’s activities to ensure it is fulfilling its mission and goals, then that position would be an overseer/elder-type role as defined in scripture. Taking a position on who is scripturally eligible to fill an overseer/elder-type role that is contrary to the SBC position statement on the matter and to which DLBC has affirmed its agreement would warrant disaffiliation with the SBC. The discussion to allow women in the office of pastor/elder/overseer in disagreement with the SBC position statement is outside the scope of the Bylaws Team.

3. Tone and Purpose of the New Member Class Requirement

While a New Member Class can be a valuable orientation tool, the current language suggests a vetting process that could feel more like gatekeeping than shepherding. Membership should be based on a credible profession of faith in Christ and a willingness to covenant with this body—not on passing an evaluative process that might unintentionally communicate suspicion toward those God is bringing to us.

Additionally, requiring children under a certain age to attend such a class is not developmentally appropriate. Younger children will not grasp the content in a meaningful way, and their discipleship is best nurtured through age-appropriate ministry and parental guidance. I recommend exempting children below a set age (e.g., 12 or 13) from this requirement and focusing instead on equipping parents to lead their children spiritually.

I am also deeply concerned about a comment reportedly made that we will not affirm a person from the congregation when they come forward during a time of decision until they have gone through the new member class. This practice is wrong. When someone comes to the altar to join the body, they are responding publicly to God’s call and seeking fellowship with His people. Delaying their affirmation until after an administrative process diminishes the significance of that moment and risks quenching the Spirit’s work in their heart. Scripture models immediate reception into the fellowship upon a credible profession of faith and baptism (Acts 2:41–42), not conditional approval based on class attendance.

Response:

The concept of a new-members class is an evaluative process only in that it asks the prospective member to affirm their belief in DLBC’s statement of beliefs. It is primarily a communication tool to ensure candidates fully understand the church’s beliefs and affirm their agreement with those beliefs. There are numerous examples in scripture of problems within the local church because of

the assimilation of the surrounding culture. Some of these include the church at Corinth (1 and 2 Corinthians) and the churches identified in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. The purposes of requiring attendance at a new members class are to explain the beliefs of the church and to explain the way the church is operating. There has been no proposed change in the church's right to decide who becomes a member as stated in the 2018 Bylaws, Article 6.1, Membership, that states: "The members reserve the right to determine who shall be members of this corporation and the condition of such membership." Church membership bestows upon the individual the right to have a say in the running of the church by entitling them to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the active members in accordance with Section 6.3. Therefore, new-member classes are necessary to help ensure the church does not assimilate the culture in our society that is not biblically based or other denominational beliefs contrary to the DLBC stated beliefs by clearly communicating DLBC's beliefs to prospective new members. It does not affect attendance or participation in church activities by anyone wishing to worship at DLBC if they conduct themselves in an orderly fashion.

The passage in Acts cited as scriptural evidence of immediate acceptance into membership does not apply to the governance of the church which is what membership at DLBC bestows upon a person in accordance with Section 6.3 of the Bylaws. The passage in Acts refers to the process of worship as described in the acts of teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. Any person can worship at DLBC without being a member as stated previously.

Minors (defined as anyone under the age of 18) should be accompanied by their legal guardians to a new-member class and the intent is to tailor the material in the class to the age of the attendees. The legal guardian should be the primary person to determine whether the maturity of the minor is sufficient to allow them to participate as a voting member of the congregation and, therefore, pursue church membership. Section 6.2(2) in the proposed amendment has been revised to include the following statement: "The agenda for the classes should be age appropriate for the attendees." But as stated previously, membership is not required for worship or participating in church activities. It is necessary if the person wants to have a say in the church's affairs, be a voting member of a ministry team, or lead ministry activities.

The 2018 Bylaws and the practice of the church have been to allow any person to present themselves for membership at any worship service. But Article 6.2 of the 2018 Bylaws gave the discretion to the Senior Pastor as to whether a counseling session on the basic beliefs of the church was needed prior to presenting the candidate to the church for membership. This amendment simply removes that discretion and helps ensure every new member is counselled on the church's beliefs.

4. Overall Missional and Relational Impact

These issues—gender restrictions on elders, inconsistent application of biblical qualifications, and rigid membership vetting—risk creating unnecessary stumbling blocks to unity, discipleship, and outreach. We must guard against practices that may satisfy an

internal sense of order but inadvertently drive people away or overshadow the gospel message. The way we handle leadership qualifications and membership requirements will speak volumes to believers and nonbelievers alike about our understanding of grace, calling of all believers.

Response:

The Bylaws Team sees a difference in the comment between the call to guard against false teaching and doctrine within the church and the ministering of grace and the gospel to a lost world. Scripture is replete with verses warning against false teaching and actions that impact the testimony of the church and believers. We are called to set ourselves apart from the world and conformance to the word of God is an indication of our faith in His word and not faith in our own desires and wishes. We are not restricting professing believers to worship with us or hindering unbelievers to receive the invitation of salvation but rather we are ensuring those who want to participate in influencing decisions within the church believe the same as DLBC on the theological positions. Agreement on theological positions contributes to the unity in the governance of the church and helps the church members function more cohesively.

Preamble III. c., Humans

Comment

If gender is going to be heavily defined in the by laws then a definition of what a male (XY chromosome) and female (XX chromosome) are.

Also the difference between gender and sex should be considered for differentiation. With the way worldly society is now making a difference between the two and the ability for lost people to be in multiple categories.

Response:

The term “gender” is only used in the Constitution and Bylaws in three places. The first in the Constitution to refer to the good gift of God’s creation, the second in referring to the use of male, female, or neuter genders to be deemed inclusive of the others based on the context of the passage, and the third in the bathroom policy in Section 3.2 to state the church’s policy on the use of bathroom facilities based on the gender at birth. The word “gender” in common usage means the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits associated with one’s sex. The SBC position statement on humans clearly states we believe the Lord created only two sexes (male and female) and, therefore, the word “gender” used in that statement relates to one of those two sexes. The position statement on the Christian and the social order (section III. o. of the amended Constitution) states that Christians should oppose transgenderism and transvestism. Section 3.2(b) of the 2018 Bylaws and the proposed 2025 amended bylaws state “the Church believes that sexuality assigned by God at birth, whatever that may be, and the Holy Scripture does not permit an individual from altering their sexual identity physically or otherwise.” The statements clearly are inferring that the church can identify the appropriate sex of an individual without resorting to medical testing to determine the

chromosomal makeup of the individual and the church should not accept society's attempt to confuse the natural order created by God. Acceptance of any societal philosophy that confuses gender as being different than the definition of male and female created at birth is contrary to scripture.

Preamble III. f., The Church

Comment

What is an overseer? Consider removal if it is not providing any context to the office.

Again clearly define what a men and women are if it is going to be emphasized in the by laws writings.

Response:

The only reference to "overseer" in the proposed amended Constitution and Bylaws is in the Constitution, section III. f., in the description of the two scripturally recognized officers in the church. Pastor, elder, and overseer are terms used interchangeably in the New Testament. While "pastor" is limited in its direct use in many modern translations, the word is interpreted from the Greek word for shepherd and is often used in defining the responsibilities of church leaders. The term "overseer" is used throughout the New Testament along with "elder" to describe church leaders responsible for the governance of the church and decision making, ensuring doctrinal integrity, and shepherding the church. Examples include Acts 15:6, Acts 20:28-31, 1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and Titus 1:5-11. The scriptural basis for church leadership begins with God's authority and calling of human leaders to serve as stewards under His headship as seen in Exodus 18:21 and Colossians 1:18 as well as the scriptures referenced above.

The Team does not feel it is necessary to define what a man and a woman is beyond what has already been stated in the constitution and the bylaws as discussed in the response the comment under the section Preamble III. c., Humans.

BYLAWS

Section 6.1, Membership

Comment

Can we add something detailing the role of discipleship in the church? Perhaps formally included in the new members class. Also, how should discipleship be implemented in the church outside of "culture?" (NOTE: A conversation with the commenter on 8/17/23 clarified the "culture" was the culture of the church. Their question was intended to ask how to codify the discipleship process within the bylaws.)

Response:

Discipleship in the church is a multifaceted process that involves cultivating spiritual maturity, modeling Christ-like behavior, and equipping believers to live out their faith in

the world. Key elements include intentional relationships, biblical teaching, mentorship, missional living, and evangelism. The implementation of discipleship programs within the church will involve multiple teams such as the Education Ministry Team and the Missions Ministry Team and ministries within the church executing various activities such as Fall Festival, AWANA, VBS, and the benevolence program under the Body of Deacons. All these activities would be considered as implementing the discipleship portion of the church's missions and goals. One of the purposes stated in Article 4 for which DLBC was formed is to know God through discipleship. The intent of the bylaws is to define the organizational structure to govern the development and oversight of these activities to fulfill that purpose.

Section 6.2, Qualifications for Membership

Comment 1

This change means that it could be 3-4 months after requesting membership, before the process is completed. The person will have to wait for a new member class and then wait until the next church ministry meeting, which is every 3 months.

Response:

The proposed amendment does not change the 2018 Bylaws wording on the presentation of candidates for membership. The intent is to be able to present candidates for the church's approval whenever the church members are gathered. The church's current practice is to approve membership at worship services. To prevent any confusion with the meaning of "meeting" as discussed in Section 6.7, the sentence immediately following 6.2(2) stating "All candidates satisfying the membership requirements above shall be presented to the members at any regular meeting of the church for approval." will be revised to state "All candidates satisfying the membership requirements above shall be presented to the members for approval at any gathering of the church."

It is anticipated the new-member classes will be scheduled as appropriate for the number of requests for membership. The number and frequency of the classes is an implementation of the bylaws requirements and will be determined by the church leadership based on the circumstances.

Comment 2

Change the "new member class" to also include existing members that want to attend for updated church information. Calling it a new members class would likely make existing member believe they are not needed or allowed to attend. Or possibility a class that is for updated existing member on church changes, maybe an annual class that is recorded for other member to view and be keep up to date on changes.

Response:

The purpose of the new members class is to help ensure prospective new members understand the church's beliefs in the attempt to promote unity within the church and prevent teachings and behavior contrary to the church's beliefs. The requirement is addressing the process toward granting membership and does not prevent a current member from sitting in on the classes. How to conduct the classes and attendance is a subject dealing with the implementation of the bylaws and well within the authority and responsibility of the church staff.

Comment 3

Why is this mandatory, not suggestive?

Response:

Church membership bestows upon the individual the right to have a say in the running of the church by entitling them to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the active members in accordance with Section 6.3. Therefore, new member classes are necessary to help ensure the church does not assimilate the culture that is not biblically based or other denominational beliefs contrary to the DLBC stated beliefs by clearly communicating the church's beliefs to prospective new members. It does not affect attendance or participation in church activities by anyone wishing to worship at DLBC if they conduct themselves in an orderly fashion. The ability to worship at DLBC is not predicated on membership.

Comment 4

New member classes for children: How will classes be adapted for children? Who will be responsible for developing & leading classes? Do we really expect children to understand Church's beliefs to be able to affirm?

Response:

Minors (defined as anyone under the age of 18) should be accompanied by their legal guardians to a new-members class and the intent is to tailor the material in the class to the age of the attendees. The legal guardian should be the primary person to determine whether the maturity of the minor is sufficient to allow them to participate as a voting member of the congregation and, therefore, pursue church membership. Section 6.2(2) in the proposed amendment will be revised to include the following statement: "The agenda for the classes should be age appropriate for the attendees."

How to conduct the classes and attendance is a subject dealing with the implementation of the bylaws and well within the authority and responsibility of the church staff.

Comment 5

Your definition of active member is too narrow. We have active members who regularly attend SS classes but are not able to stay for worship. Some of which are more active than others who attend worship services regularly.

Response:

The definition of an active and inactive member and the determination of their status will not change from the 2018 Bylaws. The Bylaws allow for an evaluation of the reasonableness of their being unable to attend worship services and their status appropriately determined. Section 6.2 states "Persons who are unable to attend three services in a ninety-day period due to extenuating circumstances would be evaluated by the Deacon Body as to the reasonableness of the circumstances to prevent attendance."

The Body of Deacons is the best organization to address the issue because the nature of their ministry keeps them in contact with the members on a regular basis and any inability to attend worship services should be readily noticeable and verifiable by contact with the affected members. One of the key elements of the deacon ministry is ministering to the church families in all stages of their life and engaging in discussions about their absences. The deacons' regular interactions with their assigned families will identify any change in their association with the church and the reason for it.

Comment 6

Why would a 3/4 vote be required for membership?

Response:

The referenced three-fourths (3/4) vote is in relation to a candidate for membership being presented to the membership for approval and a dissent is made against their membership. This has not changed from the 2018 Bylaws and is considered reasonable considering something in the candidate's background causes their becoming a member questionable.

There is no specific vote requirement for approval of membership of candidates in the Bylaws, therefore, a simple majority is needed. But any "no" vote would constitute a dissent invoking the requirements of Section 6.2.

Section 6.4, Termination of Membership

Comment

The second paragraph on page 19 states "...excess of five years may be...". May should be changed to "will be", if the rider is a five year absence then make it active at that point. Attempts should be made to contact the person prior to their termination as a member.

Also clarification is need on how attendance is being "traced" There isn't a logging system from membership or activity levels. I understand this is a way to remove people who are no longer involved but by removing people from the church it could open up

issues if the individual did attend some service, activity or event and there is no way to determine when this occurred.

Response:

The purpose of this statement was intentionally left to the discretion of the church so as not to force a particular action unnecessarily to help clean up the membership rolls. The responsibility for determining the active or inactive status of a member is specifically defined in Section 6.2 of the Bylaws as the responsibility of the Body of Deacons. The Body of Deacons is the best organization to address the issue because the nature of their ministry keeps them in contact with the members on a regular basis and any absence of a prolonged period should be readily noticeable and verifiable by contact with the affected members. One of the key elements of the deacon ministry is ministering to the church families in all stages of their life and engaging in discussions about their absences. The deacons' regular interactions with their assigned families will identify any change in their association with the church and the reason for it.

Section 7.1, Management of the Church

Comment 1 (NOTE: Same comments were submitted under Article 9.1, Deacons, except for the last three paragraphs. Because of the variety of subjects, the comment has been grouped into 4 main subject areas identified in the response.):

From reading the bylaw changes and sitting in the explanation meeting, it is clear that the church's goal is to align with a more Biblical church organizational structure.

Non-governing congregational support/formal office of the servants to the people:
-Deacons

Leadership or governing body:
-Pastor
-Bishops/Elders/Overseers

However, there were a few comments that deviated this Biblical alignment or characterization for these formal offices.

First, the comment was made that women can be ordained deacons. Verses 1 through 7 of Acts chapter 6 clearly identifies the first 7 deacons as men. The first 7 men that held the formal office of deacon. The genders in the this verse are clear. "Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

One could argue that verse 11 of 1 Timothy opens the door for women and men to be deacons depending on the translation or version being read. The NIV states, "In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything." In most versions or translations of the Bible, these

women are translated or identified as the deacon's wives. This is reinforced in verse 12. Verse 12 states, "A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well." The gender is clearly identified as a man.

If we look at a few other versions or translations. We will see this is reinforced. King James Version states, "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things."

The English Standard Version says, "Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things."

One could reference Romans 16:1. "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae." Was Phoebe being introduced as a beloved servant from the church of Cenchreae or as a formally ordained deacon because she could not have met the Biblical requirements of a deacon. If she was a formally ordained deacon, does that mean that Paul made exceptions for the qualifications?

If the goal is to become more Biblical and above reproach. Why would we deviate of the deacon's qualifications? Why hang our hats on one verse that seems to contradict the formal Biblical qualifications?

Second, the Church is moving away from the current board of directors organizational structure. The goal of this configurational change is to be more Biblical. The members of the new board(pastor, elder, overseer, bishop) will have to meet the Biblical requirements and must be all men. We will exclude the direct influence of Godly and intelligent women from our congregation. Is this the right decision? The Bible is clear on the qualifications of pastors, elders, overseers, and bishops. But, does it specifically state that the board can only be those people? Could it not be a Biblically qualified Pastor, two Biblically qualified Elders, and two other board members? Every decision made by the board is not a decision on doctrine or spirituality. Some decisions are planning and business related.

In the end, it appears that we are going to kick women out of the governing body and decision making. But, we are going to bend to allow them to be considered for inclusion as deacons as a concession. Furthermore, how can we vote for this new configuration and not have the selection criteria spelled out ahead of time? Vote now and we will tell you the selection process later. Now, I realize there may be a reason for this change. But, it was not clearly delineated during the meeting.

If this is the way we are going and no turning back. We really need more information. Will the elders become non theologically trained preachers and preach every third Sunday? Or more of a governing ordained deacon type? Is it possible to be elder lead and maintain the congregational authority? Can we have clear checks and balances to not become elder ruled and not become Presbyterians? Restrictions on what the elders board can do without a church vote?

Then, why do the elders pick the next elders candidates? Then have the church vote on their picks? Why not have folks apply, vetted, and then voted on?

Why five years? Why not three?

Response:

The comment can be divided into the following subjects:

1. Whether women are allowed to be deacons by scripture.
2. The exclusion of women from the proposed realignment of the Board of Directors.
3. The duties of the directors and whether the church is moving away from the congregational polity.
4. The nomination process for the directors and the term of service.

The following addresses each subject:

1. Whether women are allowed to be deacons by scripture.

The proposed amendment does not change anything in the 2018 Constitution and Bylaws that affect the gender of deacons. The 2018 Bylaws and the proposed 2025 amendment do not directly address the gender of the deacons. The 2018 Constitution and Bylaws both invoke the SBC Faith and Message 2000 as the statements of belief for Dixie Lee Baptist Church (DLBC). This proposed amendment does not change that but rather incorporates directly each of the position statements contained in the SBC Faith and Message 2000. Article VI, The Church, of the SBC Faith and Message states "Its (the church) scriptural officers are pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture." This position statement only directly addresses the gender for the office of pastor/elder/overseer. While the SBC position statement does not directly prohibit women from serving as deacons, the final determination of whether women will serve at DLBC as deacons rests with the active members of DLBC and their interpretation of the Scriptures as guided by the Holy Spirit.

2. The exclusion of women from the proposed realignment of the Board of Directors.

The 2018 Constitution and Bylaws Article 7.1, Management of the Corporation, restricted the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors by stating "All powers which, under the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, would otherwise be exercised by the Board of Directors shall instead be exercised by the active members unless otherwise specifically reserved by the Board of Directors herein." The only duties of the board identified within the 2018 Bylaws are found in Article 7.5 and only consists of executing documents. This results in the active members being responsible for performing the usual duties and responsibilities of directors of a corporation such as oversight of senior management positions and strategic guidance of the organization in accomplishing its stated mission and purpose. The Bylaws Team noted several instances where this arrangement resulted in failure to correct issues in a timely and effective manner or to bring issues before the church for proper disposition. The Team is recommending the Board of Directors be realigned to address those concerns with the provision that the active Church

members will approve decisions regarding change in policies or programs being recommended by the Board. This proposed amendment allows for strategic oversight of the church's operations while ensuring the acts of the Board are approved by the active Church members. The responsibilities of elders/overseers defined in scripture include spiritual oversight and shepherding, teaching and ensuring doctrinal integrity, and governance and decision-making within the church to promote the health and mission of the church. Since this realignment would result in the Board becoming more active in the strategic oversight and accountability of the church staff and ministry teams in accordance with the church's mission and purpose, the Team felt this was a position of elder/overseer as defined in scripture and, therefore, is recommending that the members be scripturally qualified in accordance with our stated affirmation of the SBC position statements in the SBC Faith and Message 2000.

3. The duties of the directors and whether the church is moving away from the congregational polity.

The rationale for the realignment of the Board of Directors' duties and responsibilities were specifically designed to address shortcomings in addressing potential issues while at the same time maintaining the congregational polity of DLBC. The amendment of the duties found in Article 7.1, Management of the Corporation, specifically contains the following words: "The active members of the Church shall approve all decisions regarding the policies and programs in carrying out the Church's purpose and mission as defined in Article 4. The Board of Directors shall act with the approval of the active members to:" It then goes on to list those duties and responsibilities that basically involve ensuring the church is doing what it says it wants to do and staying faithful to its beliefs.

To alleviate any confusion as to the approval needed in the second sentence above, the sentence will be revised to state, "The Board of Directors shall act with approval of the active members of the Church to:..."

4. The nomination process for the directors and the term of service.

The nomination process proposed for the realigned Board of Directors is the same process that has been used by the Body of Deacons in the recent history of DLBC. The 2018 Bylaws, Article 9.2, Duties of the Body of Deacons, gives the Body of Deacons the authority for determining the willingness and qualifications of prospective deacons prior to the candidate being assigned to the Body of Deacons. This same provision is provided for the Board of Directors in the proposed Section 7.4. It is more efficient and effective for the deacons or directors to conduct the process to determine the willingness and qualifications of candidates than attempting to get each active member to make that assessment. The amendment provides for a list of candidates to be determined before they are presented to the Church members for selection to fill vacant positions, but the approval of the candidates rests with the active Church members. It allows the active Church members to nominate candidates, but the screening is done by the respective organizations.

The responsibility for developing a process to accomplish the transition from the current Board of Directors to the proposed realigned Board of Directors is well within the authority, responsibility, and duties of the Senior Pastor as provided in the Bylaws, Article 8.4, Senior Pastor. But because of concerns raised by the members about identifying details of the transition process, the following will be proposed:

If the motion on the proposed 2025 amendment is approved by the church, then a second motion will be made for the approval of the active Church members for the following transition process:

The Body of Deacons will develop a list of active male members that would be eligible for consideration for serving as a board member for the active Church members' selection. The active Church members would simultaneously be requested to submit any names for nomination of candidates to serve as board members. A final list would be presented at a meeting of the active Church members for their selection of a minimum of four (4) directors based on the following qualifications:

1. The candidate has been an active member of DLBC for at least one year.
2. The candidate meets the scriptural qualifications for an elder.
3. The candidate is willing to serve on the Board of Directors.

To allow for future continuity in the operations of the Board of Directors, the initial selection of directors will identify the term of each candidate so no more than 2 directors roll off the Board in any year. Once the realigned Board of Directors is established in accordance with this process, the succeeding Board shall use the process defined in the 2025 amended Bylaws, Section 7.4.

The term of five (5) years for service on the Board was to provide for more continuity in the function of the Board and to maintain a long-term perspective in carrying out its responsibilities. The experience of the church has been that rotation in the past for the committees every three years resulted in a lack of continuity of decisions, operations, and historical knowledge. In essence, the committees reentered the learning curve on a continual basis resulting in a loss of institutional memory at the detriment of the church. The only examples that deviated from that result were committees that limited the number of people that rotated through the committee.

Comment 2

Elders should be responsible for the spiritual leadership of the church, not the business affairs of the church. Directors should be responsible for the overall governance and legal oversight of the church. I recommend that the proposed Board of Directors be split into two boards. The first board should be a Board of Elders who will be responsible for meeting the spiritual needs of the members to include shepherding, teaching, praying, discipling, guiding and nurturing. The second board should be a Board of Directors who will execute the remainder of the listed duties. Both boards should be recommended by the nominating committee and voted on by the church. The Board of Elders should serve a 5-year term. The Board of Directors should serve a 3-year term. The Board of Elders

should be made up of Elders of the church. The Board of Directors should be made up of members of the congregation.

I recommend that the vote for the new bylaws be cast by ballot.

Response:

The responsibilities of elders/overseers defined in scripture include spiritual oversight and shepherding, teaching and ensuring doctrinal integrity, and governance and decision-making within the church to promote the health and mission of the church. Examples include Acts 15:6, Acts 20:28-31, 1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and Titus 1:5-11. Since this realignment would result in the Board becoming more active in the strategic oversight and accountability of the church staff and ministry teams in accordance with the church's mission and purpose, the Team felt this was a position of elder/overseer as defined in Scripture. Therefore, the Bylaws Team is recommending that the members of the Board of Directors be scripturally qualified in accordance with our stated affirmation of the SBC position statements in the SBC Faith and Message 2000.

The Bylaws Team does not recommend two separate bodies to perform what scripture defines as the responsibility of the elders/overseers.

The Bylaws Team does not think the Nominating Committee should be the one to nominate the members of the Board of Directors nor the Body of Deacons because the Board of Directors and the Body of Deacons are not committees implementing work within the church. The Board of Directors is to be a governing body, and the Body of Deacons is a ministerial body. Therefore, the nomination process for the Board of Directors should be the same process identified in the bylaws for the Body of Deacons in that they will verify the candidates meet the qualifications of membership, scriptural character, and willingness to serve. Just as in the development of candidates for deacons, the active Church members will submit their recommendations for the positions and the board members will be responsible for verifying qualifications.

The term of five (5) years for service on the Board was to provide for more continuity in the function of the Board and to maintain a long-term perspective in carrying out its responsibilities. The experience of the church has been that rotation in the past for the committees every three years resulted in a lack of continuity of decisions, operations, and historical knowledge. In essence, the committees reentered the learning curve on a continual basis resulting in a loss of institutional memory at the detriment of the church. The only examples that deviated from that process were committees that limited the number of people that rotated through the committee.

The method for conducting the vote will be left up to the moderator in accordance with the bylaws.

Comment 3

Where is the term there Elder defined in the by laws?

Response:

The only place the term “elder” is used in the proposed amended Bylaws is in Section 7.1 where it states members of the Board of Directors shall meet the scriptural qualifications of elders defined in the Scriptures. The term “elder,” in the context of the church, is derived from several passages in scripture including Exodus 3:16; 18:12; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5, and several passages specifically describing their responsibilities and character qualifications. The term “elder” is only used in Section 7.1 of the Bylaws because scripture does not use the term “director” and the team wanted to be clear as to the scriptural qualifications being referenced.

Comment 4

The only reason given to us about a change to a board of elders is that it is biblical. The only references in the new testament that I have read refers to elders as those who should lead by example, not compulsion (1 Peter 5:1-5); teaching and mentoring (Titus 2: 1-15), thus meeting the spiritual needs of the church, not directing the business needs. What was the reason behind choosing Elders to serve on the Board of Directors instead of active church members?

Response:

The 2018 Constitution and Bylaws Article 7.1, Management of the Corporation, restricted the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors by stating “All powers which, under the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, would otherwise be exercised by the Board of Directors shall instead be exercised by the active members unless otherwise specifically reserved by the Board of Directors herein.” The only duties of the board identified within the 2018 Bylaws are found in Article 7.5 and only consists of executing documents. This results in the active members being responsible for performing the usual duties and responsibilities of directors of a corporation such as oversight of senior management positions and strategic guidance of the organization in accomplishing its stated mission and purpose. The Bylaws Team noted several instances where this arrangement resulted in failure to correct issues in a timely and effective manner or to bring issues before the church for proper disposition. The Team is recommending the Board of Directors be realigned to address those concerns with the provision that the active Church members will approve decisions regarding change in policies or programs being recommended by the Board. This proposed amendment allows for strategic oversight of the church’s operations while ensuring the acts of the Board are approved by the active members. The responsibilities of elders/overseers defined in scripture include spiritual oversight and shepherding, teaching and ensuring doctrinal integrity, and governance and decision-making within the church to promote the health and mission of the church. Examples include Acts 15:6, Acts 20:28-31, 1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and Titus 1:5-11. Since this realignment would result in the Board becoming more active in the strategic oversight and accountability of the church staff and ministry teams in accordance with the church’s mission and purpose, the Team felt this was a position of elder/overseer as defined in Scripture. Therefore, the Bylaws Team is recommending that the members of the Board of Directors be scripturally qualified in accordance with our stated affirmation of the SBC position statements in the SBC Faith and Message 2000 and scriptural requirements for overseers/elders.

Comment 5

Can active deacons serve both as Deacons and Board of Directors, simultaneously?

Response:

The Bylaws do not restrict men serving simultaneously as a deacon and a director. The church membership elects who will serve on the Board of Directors and the Body of Deacons in accordance with Sections 7.4 and 9.1. Each of those organizations has different duties and responsibilities. The Board of Directors is a governance organization while the Body of Deacons is a ministerial organization, therefore, they have different duties and responsibilities. The Bylaws Team thinks the church members should have the prerogative to decide who they want in those positions without being restricted administratively.

Comment 6

It's not clear whose approval is needed - active members of the board or active members of the church. Please clarify.

Response:

The assumption is the comment is referring to the second sentence in Section 7.1 that states, "The Board of Directors shall act with approval of the active members to:..." To alleviate any confusion as to the approval needed in that sentence, the sentence will be revised to state, "The Board of Directors shall act with approval of the active members of the Church to:..."

Comment 7

We are currently having difficulty getting enough Deacons to sufficiently serve the congregation, how are we going to come up with at least 3 additional men to serve as Elders?

Response:

This comment cannot be addressed by the Bylaws but is a discipleship issue best addressed by each member of the church earnestly seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance with regards to their service to the church and responding obediently to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Comment 8

Board of Directors must participate and encourage in discipleship.

Response

Discipleship in the church is a multifaceted process that involves cultivating spiritual maturity, modeling Christ-like behavior, and equipping believers to live out their faith in the world. Key elements include intentional relationships, biblical teaching, mentorship, missional living, and evangelism. The implementation of discipleship programs within the church will involve multiple teams such as the Education Ministry Team and the Missions Ministry Team and ministries within the church executing various activities such as Fall Festival, AWANA, VBS, and the benevolence program under the Body of Deacons. All these activities would be considered as implementing the discipleship portion of the church's missions and goals. The intent of the bylaws is to define the organizational structure to govern the development and oversight of these activities.

Article 4(b) of both the 2018 Bylaws and the proposed 2025 amendment state one of the purposes for which DLBC was formed was to know God through discipleship. Section 7.1 of the proposed amendment states the Board of Directors are responsible for maintaining the purpose and mission of the Church and developing strategic plans to ensure the continuity and growth of the Church's purpose and mission. One those purposes would include discipleship programs at DLBC.

Section 7.2, Board of Directors

Comment

I do not agree with using the term "Board of Directors" and "Elders" interchangeably. I believe the board of directors responsibilities should remain the same and be allowed to deal with the business side of church operations. This would allow women to also serve in this role.

Elders should be a new position/role for the spiritual overseer of the church and would be allowed to focus on these task without having the additional responsibilities of a director. As a volunteer position the current setup would essentially doubling the work load of the current board of directors. You also are now limiting the available canadines for the exiting board of directors position since only men can serve in the elder role.

Response:

The responsibilities of elders/overseers defined in scripture include spiritual oversight and shepherding, teaching and ensuring doctrinal integrity, and governance and decision-making within the church to promote the health and mission of the church. Examples include Acts 15:6, Acts 20:28-31, 1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and Titus 1:5-11. Since this realignment would result in the Board becoming more active in the strategic oversight and accountability of the church staff and ministry teams in accordance with the church's mission and purpose, the Bylaws Team felt this was a position of elder/overseer as defined in Scripture. Therefore, the Bylaws Team is recommending that the members of the Board of Directors be scripturally qualified in accordance with our stated affirmation of the SBC position statements in the SBC Faith and Message 2000 and scriptural requirements.

The only place the term “elder” is used in the proposed amended Bylaws is in Section 7.1 where it states members of the Board of Directors shall meet the scriptural qualifications of elders defined in the scriptures. The term “elder,” in the context of the church, is derived from several passages in scripture including Exodus 3:16; 18:12; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5, and several passages specifically describing their responsibilities and character qualifications. The term is only used in Section 7.1 of the Bylaws because scripture does not use the term “director” and the team wanted to be clear as to the scriptural qualifications being referenced.

The current workload of the existing Board of Directors is defined in the Bylaws to only signing contracts. In accordance with Section 7.1 of the 2018 Bylaws, all powers which, under the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, would otherwise be exercised by the Board of Directors shall instead be exercised by the active members. As noted earlier, The Team felt this configuration is not effective in handling issues in the church.

Section 7.4, Election of Directors

Comment 1

This is not clear. Are you recommending that the current Board of Directors develop a nomination process for the new Board of Directors?

Response:

No, the current Board of Directors will not develop a nomination process for the realigned Board of Directors. The initial nomination process will use the same method used by the Body of Deacons to determine candidates’ scriptural qualifications and willingness to serve before their names are presented to the members for selection.

If the motion on the proposed 2025 amendment is approved by the church, then a second motion will be made for the approval of the active Church members for the following transition process:

The Body of Deacons will develop a list of active male members that would be eligible for consideration for serving as a board member for the active Church members’ selection. The active Church members would simultaneously be requested to submit any names for nomination of candidates to serve as board members. A final list would be presented at a meeting of the active Church members for their selection of a minimum of four (4) directors based on the following qualifications:

1. The candidate has been an active member of DLBC for at least one year.
2. The candidate meets the scriptural qualifications for an elder.
3. The candidate is willing to serve as a director of DLBC.

To allow for future continuity in the operations of the Board of Directors, the initial selection of directors will identify the term of each candidate so no more than 2 directors roll off the Board in any year. Once the realigned Board of Directors is

established in accordance with this process, the succeeding Board shall use the process defined in the 2025 amended Bylaws, Section 7.4.

Comment 2

I personally believe that an individual in the church should not be able to hold the positions of Board of Directors (Elder) and Deacon at the same time. To me elders and deacons are the most critical positions below the pastor and this would give an individual too much influence in important areas of the church operation.

I would like to see more detail on how the board of directors positions will be selected, specifically this first selection process. I'm not clear on how this will work because of the statement in page 22 "The board is responsible for electing its own officers."

Response:

The church membership elects who will serve on the Board of Directors and the Body of Deacons in accordance with Sections 7.4 and 9.1. Each of those organizations has different duties and responsibilities. The Board of Directors is a governance organization while the Body of Deacons is a ministerial organization, therefore, they have different duties and responsibilities. The Bylaws Team thinks the church members should have the prerogative to decide who they want in those positions without being restricted administratively.

The initial nomination process will use the same method used by the Body of Deacons to determine candidates' scriptural qualifications and willingness to serve before their names are presented to the church members for selection.

If the motion on the proposed 2025 amendment is approved by the church, then a second motion will be made for the approval of the active Church members for the following transition process:

The Body of Deacons will develop a list of active male members that would be eligible for consideration for serving as a board member for the active Church members' selection. The active Church members would simultaneously be requested to submit any names for nomination of candidates to serve as board members. A final list would be presented at a meeting of the active Church members for their selection of a minimum of four (4) directors based on the following qualifications:

1. The candidate has been an active member of DLBC for at least one year.
2. The candidate meets the scriptural qualifications for an elder.
3. The candidate is willing to serve as a director of DLBC.

To allow for future continuity in the operations of the Board of Directors, the initial selection of directors will identify the term of each candidate so no more than 2 directors roll off the Board in any year. Once the realigned Board of Directors is established in accordance with this process, the succeeding Board shall use the process defined in the 2025 amended Bylaws, Section 7.4.

The statement in Section 7.4 stating the Board is responsible for electing its own officers is clearly referring to the internal governance of the Board of Directors (e.g., chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, etc.).

Comment 3

Again, it's not clear if you are referring to the current Board of Directors or the new Board of Directors and whether you are referring to active members of the Board of Directors or active members of the church. Please clarify.

Response:

This section refers to the realigned Board of Directors in accordance with the 2025 amended Bylaws, if approved. Obviously, a transition will need to take place from the existing Board of Directors' configuration to the proposed realigned Board of Directors.

The initial nomination process will use the same method used by the Body of Deacons to determine candidates' scriptural qualifications and willingness to serve before their names are presented to the members for selection.

If the motion on the proposed 2025 amendment is approved by the church, then a second motion will be made for the approval of the active Church members for the following transition process:

The Body of Deacons will develop a list of active male members that would be eligible for consideration for serving as a board member for the active Church members' selection. The active Church members would simultaneously be requested to submit any names for nomination of candidates to serve as board members. A final list would be presented at a meeting of the active Church members for their selection of a minimum of four (4) directors based on the following qualifications:

1. The candidate has been an active member of DLBC for at least one year.
2. The candidate meets the scriptural qualifications for an elder.
3. The candidate is willing to serve as a director of DLBC.

To allow for future continuity in the operations of the Board of Directors, the initial selection of directors will identify the term of each candidate so no more than 2 directors roll off the Board in any year. Once the realigned Board of Directors is established in accordance with this process, the succeeding Board shall use the process defined in the 2025 amended Bylaws, Section 7.4.

To clarify the selection of the members of the Board, the sentence in Section 7.4 that states, "The active members shall select three (3) or more directors..." will be revised to state, "The active members of the Church shall select three (3) or more directors..."

Comment 4

Which Board of Directors, current or new Board (Elders) shall develop a nomination process to recommend directors to serve? I heard a verbal clarification that the pastor & deacons would make recommendations.

Response:

The current Board of Directors will not develop a nomination process for the realigned Board of Directors. The initial nomination process will use the same method used by the Body of Deacons to determine candidates' scriptural qualifications and willingness to serve before their names are presented to the church members for selection.

If the motion on the proposed 2025 amendment is approved by the church, then a second motion will be made for the approval of the active Church members for the following transition process:

The Body of Deacons will develop a list of active male members that would be eligible for consideration for serving as a board member for the active Church members' selection. The active Church members would simultaneously be requested to submit any names for nomination of candidates to serve as board members. A final list would be presented at a meeting of the active Church members for their selection of a minimum of four (4) directors based on the following qualifications:

1. The candidate has been an active member of DLBC for at least one year.
2. The candidate meets the scriptural qualifications for an elder.
3. The candidate is willing to serve as a director of DLBC.

To allow for future continuity in the operations of the Board of Directors, the initial selection of directors will identify the term of each candidate so no more than 2 directors roll off the Board in any year. Once the realigned Board of Directors is established in accordance with this process, the succeeding Board shall use the process defined in the 2025 amended Bylaws, Section 7.4.

Section 10.2, Permanent Ministry Teams

Comment

Please clarify the term "Permanent Ministry Teams" vs Permanent assignment positions. As a member of Safety and Security Team this is a permanent assignment that individuals don't roll off after a 3 year basis. Aren't all ministry teams permanent groups?

Response:

The use of the adjective "permanent" simply means the ministry teams are intended to be part of the long-term structure of the church to implement the church's mission and goals and only the church members can disband them. The Emergency Response Team as identified on the Ministry Teams list put before the Church by the Nominating Ministry Team will be an implementing function of the Safety and Security Ministry Team. The rotation of members of the Safety and Security Team will be per the Bylaws but

some implementing teams (e.g., counters and the Emergency Response Team) can be limited in their rotation by the church members. As stated in Section 10.2(g), the Safety and Security Team is responsible for developing policies and procedures to help ensure the safety and well-being of church members, guests, and staff. This will include assessing potential risks and recommending mitigative actions for events such as weather, medical crises, fire response, security threats, and protection of vulnerable individuals. The Safety and Security Ministry Team is responsible for establishing policies and procedures and the Emergency Response Team will implement policy and procedures.

Section 10.4, Authority of Teams

Comment

Is the senior pastor supposed to attend or designate someone to attend in his place for all ministry team meetings? If this designee is supposed to be someone outside of elected team members I don't believe this is happening on a regular bases in the team meetings I attend.

Response:

"Ex officio" simply means he is a member based on his responsibility as president of the corporation. Sections 8.1 and 8.4 define the responsibility of the Senior Pastor as the president of the corporation and responsible to lead the members, organizations, and the staff of the church to fulfill the ministries and programs of the church. It goes on to state he shall be the leader of the congregation, staff, all church organizations, ministries and advisory teams to accomplish the purpose of the church. This doesn't mean he must attend every meeting, just as team members don't attend every meeting of the teams. His attendance is dependent upon being notified of a meeting and his decision to engage in an area that needs his attention. It provides the latitude for the Senior Pastor to manage by exception and engage in those areas and ministries that are of concern and importance to him. His or his designee's attendance at ministry team meetings is also a function of the number of staff the church employs and the demand on their time.

Section 11.2, Duties of the Church Council

Comment

Clarifies the recommendations of the Church council shall be approved by church members. I would like to see the same language used in Article 7 for the Board of Directors (Elders).

Response:

Section 7.1, Management of the Church, of the proposed amended Bylaws currently states "The active members of the Church shall approve all decisions regarding the policies and programs in carrying out the Church's purpose and mission as defined in

Article 4. The Board of Directors shall act with approval of the active members to:.." and then goes on to state the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors.

To help ensure no confusion about what members are being referenced, the second sentence above will be revised to state "The Board of Directors shall act with approval of the active members of the Church to:.."