

# PEACHTREE CITY FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH CHURCH CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS UPDATE

Here is a side-by-side comparison of the 2019 Constitution and Bylaws and the 2025 Amended and Restated Constitution and Bylaws.

## **PRIMARY DIFFERENCES**

### **1. Governance – Article 101**

To meet the requirements of Georgia Non-profit Law (Georgia Code ~ 14-3-801-803) – Governance shifted from a pastor-led, MAC accountable advisory structure to a shared board-governed model led by the senior pastor.

The participants of the board remain the same, including the chair and vice chair of deacons, elected by the diaconate, the chair and vice chair of the Stewardship and Personnel Committees, a Trustee, and Church Treasurer as elected by the church through the nominating process. The board serves as a representation of the congregation with delegated authority to serve as the congregation's proxy for polity, governance, administration, and operational oversight on matters not reserved to the membership.

### **2. Ministry Advisory Council (MAC) becomes Ministry Leadership Board (MLB)**

Since the MAC is no longer just an advisory team but a Board of Directors gaining mutual governing authority under the leadership of the Senior Pastor – the name changed and becomes the MLB.

In 2019, the Ministry Advisory Council (MAC):

- advises the Senior Pastor and staff serving as a sounding board
- assists with transitions and some personnel matters
- determines when some matters require a church vote

In 2025, the MLB:

- governs the church's corporate affairs and gives oversight to legal, financial, and operational matters
- acts as the board and makes final determinations in a number of areas
- reviews amendments and controls policy adoption through the Operations Manual
- has final authority in membership, administration, and discipline,

### **3. Membership Voting Rights**

In 2019, members age 14 and older could vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in church business meetings. In 2025, in accordance with Georgia Non-Profit Law, members age 18 and older may vote on these same specified categories, including:

- calling a lead pastor
- bylaws changes
- deacons, committee leaders, and trustees
- annual budget
- certain major property expenditures and certain debt decisions
- dissolution

The new version expressly says that only those listed items require a membership vote, unless the Senior Pastor and MLB choose to submit other matters.

#### **4. Membership Admission**

In 2019, membership largely depended on profession of faith, baptism, and completion of the membership class. In 2025, membership requires four defined steps, including:

- profession of faith
- baptism or willingness to be baptized
- completion of the membership class
- approval by the Senior Pastor or his designee, or the MLB if the pastorate is vacant  
(This was the recommendation of the lawyer to best protect the church)

#### **5. Membership Termination and Discipline**

In 2019, the deacons held the decisive role in discipline and restoration, after consultation with MAC. In 2025, the MLB becomes the final decision-maker in accordance with the duties of an active Board of Directors per Georgia Non-Profit law.

- for discipline and restoration
- for termination of membership in its “sole and absolute discretion” after consultation with the Pastor

#### **6. Document Formalization**

The 2025 version is more legally framed, having been reviewed by legal counsel, and is in accordance with Georgia Non-Profit Law (Georgia Code ~ 14-3-801 through 803). It adds or strengthens language related to:

- Georgia nonprofit code
- fiduciary governance and board authority
- indemnification and insurance
- civil law compliance and ecclesiastical autonomy
- judicial non-review language
- quorum rules for board meetings

#### **7. Committee Structure**

In 2019, committees and ministry teams are more numerous and broadly described:

- Nominating
- Personnel
- Finance
- Ministry support teams
- Churchwide ministry teams
- Special purpose committees

In 2025, the structure is more streamlined:

- Standing Committees are Personnel and Stewardship

- Nominating becomes a regular recurring special-purpose committee
- many operational details are moved to the Church Operations Manual
- ministry teams are largely removed from the bylaws proper

## OTHER DIFFERENCES

### 1. Preamble and Identity

- 2019 names the church as First Baptist Church of Peachtree City, Incorporated.
- 2025 renames it Peachtree City First Baptist Church, Incorporated (PTCFBC).
- The preamble in 2025 adds language distinguishing the church from other churches, organizations, and affiliations.

### 2. Affiliations

- 2019 explicitly names affiliation with:
  - Southern Baptist Convention
  - Georgia Baptist Convention
  - Fairburn Baptist Association
- 2025 Speaks generally of voluntary cooperation with “like-minded Great Commission” churches, conventions, associations, networks, and ministries to reflect a boarder approach that we have been engaged with for more than 20 years.

### 3. Articles of Faith

The theology is mostly the same, but there are a number of wording refinements:

- gender/sexuality statement is tightened stylistically
- marriage wording becomes more precise: *one man and one woman*
- some phrases are smoothed for readability and legal clarity

Per the council of our lawyer, and much discussion amongst the committee, references to the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message were removed because it is a document that our church does not control. As an autonomous baptist church we should be in control of our doctrinal statements. PTCFBC has always maintained our own doctrinal statement. This change removes any potential ambiguity and affirms our autonomy as a local baptist church.

### 4. Amendments

- 2019 requires proposed amendments to be referred to an appointed constitutional/bylaws review team formed under a special-purpose committee
- 2025 sends amendments directly to the MLB for review
- 2019 threshold: three-fourths (3/4) vote
- 2025 threshold: two-thirds vote after quorum is established
- 2019 publication requirement: two weeks prior
- 2025 publication requirement: at least 10 days prior
- 2025 expressly references GA Code 14-3 Article 10

### 5. Addendums | Manual Structure

- 2019 specifies addendum material for Personnel, Finance, Nominating, Deacons, Missions, Benevolence, and General Operations. 2025 consolidates these into a Church Operations Manual. 2019 contains more concrete examples of what must be in General Operations, including youth/child protection, facility usage, and wedding policy. Those examples are not required in the bylaws, but will be managed through the operations manual.

## 6. Official Copy Maintenance

- 2019 includes detailed procedures about:
  - corporate seal and date affixed at bottom
  - destruction of old copies and updating computer copies
- 2025 greatly shortens this section and removes most of those procedural details

## 7. Dissolution placement

- 2019 places dissolution in Article 105
- 2025 moves dissolution to Article 606
- 2025 adds that dissolution is determined by congregational vote at the time proposed and cites GA Code § 14-3-1402

## 8. Membership Terminology

- 2019 says membership and partnership are interchangeable
- 2025 drops the “partnership” terminology and uses straightforward membership language

## 9. Membership Requirements

- 2019 requires completion of the church class and lists two ways to fulfill that requirement
- 2025 requires a designated membership class, agreement with church beliefs/practices/mission, and explicit approval by leadership
- 2025 adds a dispute-resolution clause: any dissent about a candidate goes to the Senior Pastor and MLB

## 10. Eligibility for Office

- 2019 eligibility for elective office: 21
- 2025 eligibility for elective office: 25

## 11. Voting Limitations and Definitions

- 2025 adds detailed rules not present in 2019:
  - no proxy or absentee voting – voting only in person
  - only active members present may vote
  - if necessary – ballot distribution and screening overseen by MLB
  - active engagement and giving are religious determinations made in MLB’s sole discretion
  - voting process and outcomes are declared not subject to civil court review (per legal council)

## 12. Property Exclusion | Trespass Language

- Both versions give authority to suspend or revoke access to church property
- 2025 clarifies that permanent exclusion must follow criminal trespass procedures under civil law

### 13. Termination of Membership

- 2019 lists five grounds
- 2025 adds a sixth ground:
  - termination by MLB determination in its sole and absolute discretion after consultation with the Senior Pastor, unless the Senior Pastor role is vacant

### 14. Discipline Process

- 2019: Senior Pastor + deacons consult MAC; deacons make final determination
- 2025: Senior Pastor + chair/vice chair of deacons consult MLB; MLB may or may not allow a hearing; MLB makes final determination. 2025 explicitly says the decision regarding a hearing is in the MLB's sole and absolute discretion

### 15. Restoration Process

- 2019 restoration goes through Senior Pastor to active deacons; deacons act on behalf of church
- 2025 restoration goes through Senior Pastor to the MLB; the MLB restores by majority vote

### 16. Officer Protection | Indemnification

- 2019 says officers are covered against personal liability by church insurance
- 2025 adds extensive indemnification language tied to Georgia law and insurance coverage, including directors, officers, and employees

#### Senior Pastor

- 2019 says the Senior Pastor is accountable to the church
- 2025 says the Senior Pastor is accountable to the MLB on behalf of the church

#### Pastoral and Ministerial Staff

- 2019 separates "Pastoral Staff (Ordained)" and "Ministry Staff (Not Ordained)" with sparse detail
- 2025 adds stronger theological language: ministers are "commissioned" while ordained pastors function as elders and ministry staff serves as an extension of the Senior Pastor's leadership

#### Deacons

- 2019 gives more qualifications in the bylaws themselves, including:
  - male over 21+ who been in active membership for at least 1-year who attends, gives, and serves
  - has a discernible call
  - agreement with church doctrinal statement and church polity
- 2025 explicitly states deacons are a serving body and not a governing body
- 2025 moved the qualifications from the bylaws and refers them to Deacon Ministry Guide in the Operations Manual

#### Clerk

- 2019 says the clerk maintains church membership

- 2025 says the clerk oversees and maintains electronic membership records

### **Treasurer**

- 2019 contains a detailed duty list in the bylaws
- 2025 removes most of those specifics and places duties and qualifications in the Stewardship section of the Operations Manual

### **Trustees**

- 2019 says one rotating trustee designated CEO serves on the MAC
- 2025 says one trustee serves annually on the MLB and is the Chairman of the Board of Directors
- 2019 lists trustee duties in more detail inside the bylaws
- 2025 simplifies the section and centralizes authority around MLB/board structure

### **MLB Membership and Procedure**

- 2019 MAC included:
  - Senior Pastor
  - one SLT designee
  - chair/vice chair of deacons
  - chair/vice chair of personnel
  - chair/vice chair of finance
  - one trustee
- 2025 MLB includes:
  - Senior Pastor
  - chair/vice chair of deacons
  - chair/vice chair of personnel
  - chair/vice chair of stewardship
  - one trustee
  - one pastoral staff designee
  - treasurer, non-voting except in the absence of the chair/vice chair of stewardship

### **MLB procedural additions**

The 2025 version adds things not present in 2019:

- specific board quorum
- required representation from personnel, stewardship, deacons, and trustee
- agenda-setting rules
- remote participation permission for MLB meetings

### **Staff Categories**

- 2019 has four categories: pastoral, ministry, director, support
- 2025 adds Ministry Interns as a fifth category
- 2025 clarifies ministry staff are commissioned, not merely “not ordained”

### **Committees**

- 2019 included Nominating, Personnel, Finance, future committees, ministry teams, missions team, benevolence team, support teams. 2025 narrows standing committees to Personnel and Stewardship

- Nominating is now a special-purpose committee

### **Committee Restrictions**

- 2025 adds:
  - family members may not serve on more than one standing committee concurrently
  - spouses or family members of active staff may not serve on a standing committee
  - one-year wait after a 3-year term before serving again on any standing committee
- 2019 did not include these restrictions in the same form

### **Meetings**

- 2019 called for biannual regular business meetings in May and October.
- 2025 calls for annual regular business meeting, with a spring meeting and a printed fall update
- 2019 allowed regular and special ministry meetings with one-week notice
- 2025 preserves informational meeting notice but is more flexible on regular scheduling

### **Quorum**

- 2019 quorum: those attending a properly called meeting, but references a minimum of 100 qualified voting members
- 2025 quorum: 50 members

### **Parliamentary Procedure**

- 2019 uses “Roberts Rule of Order”
- 2025 updates this to Roberts Rule of Order Newly Revised

### **Bottom Line**

The 2025 bylaws move toward a pastor-led, board-governed, delegated-authority model, as recommended by legal counsel and in compliance with Georgia non-profit law, where:

- the MLB functions as the Board of Directors
- the congregation votes on the same matters as the previous version
- the Senior Pastor and MLB maintain authority over governance, membership, and operations
- many details are shifted out of the bylaws into an Operations Manual, which allows for easier and more frequent updates

## 2019 Constitution & Bylaws vs 2025 Amended & Restated Constitution & Bylaws

Section	2019 Bylaws	2025 Amended Bylaws	Significance
Church Name	First Baptist Church of Peachtree City, Inc.	Peachtree City First Baptist Church, Inc. (PTCFBC)	Minor structural rename but is our actual corporate identity.
Affiliation	Explicitly affiliated with SBC, Georgia Baptist Convention, and Fairburn Baptist Association.	Removes named affiliations and instead states voluntary cooperation with churches, associations, networks, and ministries.	Reduces formal denominational language and preserves autonomy in stronger legal terms.
Preamble	Emphasizes preserving liberties of members and church freedom among churches.	Expands language about independence from outside organizations and ecclesiastical autonomy.	Stronger legal protection of internal governance authority.
Governance	Governance vested in the senior pastor with MAC advisory council only.	Governance delegated to Ministry Leadership Board (MLB) acting as Board of Directors with the senior pastor.	Major structural change from advisory leadership to board governance in accord with Georgia nonprofit law
MAC vs MLB Authority	MAC advises pastor and staff. Not a governing body.	MLB manages corporate, legal, financial, and operational affairs of the church.	Advisory council becomes governing board with fiduciary authority.
Senior Pastor Leadership	Senior Pastor accountable directly to the church.	Senior Pastor accountable to the MLB acting on behalf of the church.	Leadership accountability shifts MAC to governing board.
Membership Voting Rights	Members age 14+ vote on all matters brought to the church.	Members age 18+ vote on all matters brought to the church.	Georgia nonprofit law requirement.
Membership Admission	Requires profession of faith, baptism, and class completion.	Requires profession of faith, baptism or willingness to be baptized, membership class, and approval by Senior Pastor or MLB.	Leadership gains authority over membership admission.
Membership Termination	Death, transfer, discipline, membership elsewhere, voluntary request.	Same plus termination by MLB discretion after consultation with pastor.	Board given authority to remove members.
Membership Discipline Authority	Deacons lead process; final determination made by Deacons.	Senior Pastor + Deacon leadership consult MLB; MLB makes final determination.	Authority shifts from deacons to governing council.
Membership Restoration	Deacons restore member by majority vote.	MLB restores member by majority vote.	Further consolidation of authority in MLB.

Section	2019 Bylaws	2025 Amended Bylaws	Significance
Voting Eligibility for Office	Members 21+ eligible for church offices.	Members 25+ eligible for church offices.	Raises leadership eligibility age. Georgia Law
Indemnification Legal Protection	Officers covered by liability insurance.	Extensive indemnification language tied to Georgia nonprofit law.	Stronger legal protection for leadership and board members.
Deacon Role	Significant involvement in governance matters and discipline.	Explicitly described as servant body, not governing body.	Clarifies leadership hierarchy under board governance.
Trustees	Trustees hold property and serve legal functions; rotating CEO on MAC.	Trustees hold property and serve legal functions; One trustee annually serves on MLB and becomes Chairman of the Board.	Trustees integrated into board structure.
Committees	Standing committees include Nominating, Personnel, Finance.	Standing committees reduced to Personnel and Stewardship. Nominating becomes special-purpose.	Simplifies committee structure and centralizes authority.
Committee Oversight	Committees accountable directly to church.	Committees operate under oversight of Senior Pastor and MLB via Operations Manual.	Operational authority moves to leadership structure.
Operations Policies	Many operational policies contained directly in bylaws.	Policies moved into Church Operations Manual controlled by MLB.	Allows leadership to update policies without bylaw amendments.
Business Meetings Frequency	Biannual meetings (May and October).	Annual business meeting with possible special meetings.	Fewer congregational decision meetings.
Quorum Requirement	Minimum of 100 voting members.	Minimum of 50 members.	Easier to conduct official business.
Voting Procedures	Less defined procedures.	No proxy voting; no absentee voting; active engagement determined by MLB.	Board gains authority to define voting eligibility.
Remote Meetings	Not addressed.	Remote participation allowed for MLB meetings; member meetings must be in person.	Adds modern governance capability.
Judicial Protection Language	Minimal legal language.	Explicit statement that voting process and results are ecclesiastical matters not subject to civil court review.	Protects church decisions legally.

Section	2019 Bylaws	2025 Amended Bylaws	Significance
Addendums / Policies	Lists specific manuals (Finance, Personnel, Missions, etc.).	Consolidates policies into single Operations Manual maintained by MLB.	Simplifies structure and centralizes authority.
Dissolution Clause	Standard nonprofit dissolution language.	Adds reference to GA nonprofit code and congregational vote requirement.	Strengthens legal compliance.