

**AVIANO BAPTIST CHURCH**

**CONSTITUTION**

**AND**

**BYLAWS**

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*Adopted by church vote: 22 August 2021*

*Ronald R. J., PASTOR*  
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# **CONSTITUTION**

## **PREAMBLE**

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

## **ARTICLE I - NAME**

This body shall be known as the Aviano Baptist Church located in the province of Pordenone, in the country of Italy.

## **ARTICLE II – MISSION STATEMENT**

As a local body of Christ, our commitment to Jesus' Great Commission is affirmed in our mission statement: "Loving Jesus more and leading more to love Jesus."

"Loving Jesus more" reminds us that our task of discipleship must be intentional to help believers come to know and love Jesus in a deeper way, resulting in a greater level of submission and obedience.

"Leading more to love Jesus" reminds us that our task of making disciples also includes being intentional about making new disciples in accordance with Jesus' commands in Matt 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8.

## **ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and is the foundation of our beliefs (II Timothy 3:16). The church subscribes to the doctrinal statements of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We bond ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of this church are baptism (Romans 6:3-5) and the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-28).

## **ARTICLE IV - RELATIONSHIPS**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose its membership. It is not under the control of any other ecclesiastical body. It recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among International Baptist Churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with, and support the International Baptist Convention (English Language). The church shall also maintain membership in a doctrinally-compatible Italian fellowship of churches as needed for legal identity in Italy.

## **ARTICLE V – CHURCH OFFICERS**

The officers of Aviano Baptist Church shall be the pastor, the deacons, and the trustees as called and installed by democratic action and vote of the church in an appropriate business meeting.

### Section 1. Pastor

1. The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor, working with the deacons, church officers and staff, shall recognize, supervise, direct, promote, develop, and enlarge the spiritual program of this church, including, but not limited to, worship, study, training, missions, and evangelism. His office and place of leadership shall be respected and honored at all times.
2. The pastor shall be an ordained Baptist minister or become ordained as soon as practical upon assumption of the office. He must meet all qualifications of 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Additionally, he must agree with the church Statement of Faith. He must maintain a Biblical standard of morality throughout his term of service.
3. A pastor's contract shall be negotiated between the pastor search committee and the prospective pastor. The contract will include, but is not limited to, basic salary, payment of retirement benefits, leave benefits, car allowances, housing allowances, early termination, provisions for severance pay, and transportation from and to the United States, or home origin. Said contract shall be presented to the Church Council at a regularly scheduled meeting for approval and inclusion in the church record. The normal contract shall be for a minimum of three years to indefinite and said contract shall adhere to all International Baptist Convention guidelines for the purposes of length of stay, furlough, etc. All updates and changes shall be negotiated between the deacons and the pastor and then recommended by the deacons to the Church Council in a regular meeting. No pastor shall be called from the United States for a period of time shorter than three years.
4. Whenever the pastor is personally unable to fill the pulpit, he shall coordinate with the deacon body to ensure pulpit supply.
5. The pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.
6. Whenever a vacancy occurs at either the pastor's or church's request, with a 3-month notice given by either, a pastor search committee shall be formed to facilitate the process of calling a pastor. The committee shall be elected by the church specifically for this purpose and its recommendation shall constitute a nomination. Any member can make other nominations to be considered by the pastor search committee according to the policy established by the church. The committee shall review all recommendations and shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot, an affirmative vote of ninety percent of those present and eligible to vote being necessary for choice. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks notice has been given.

### Section 2. Deacons

1. There shall be a sufficient number of deacons to adequately minister to the needs of the church body. When needed, the congregation will nominate men who meet the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and have demonstrated spiritual maturity, proven service, faithfulness to the church, and regular church attendance. Those men will be referred to a deacon interview committee, consisting of pastor and the deacon body. The names of those whom the deacon body believe are being called by God to serve will be presented at a regular or special-called business meeting and voted on separately. In addition to the qualification already mentioned, a

deacon candidate must have been a member of the church for six months and have at least one year remaining in Aviano at the time of election.

2. Deacons must be in agreement with the church's Statement of Faith and must maintain a Biblical standard of morality throughout their term of service.
3. The deacon body will elect their chairman annually and make it a matter of church record in their report to the Church Council at the next regular meeting.
4. The deacons are to be servants of the church. In accordance with the New Testament practice they are to serve with the pastor and staff in performing the ministries of the church; proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers; care for the church members and other persons in the community and lead the church to achieve its objectives (Acts 6:1-7).
5. In the absence of a full time pastor, the Chairman of the Deacons is the administrative head of the church.

### Section 3. Trustees

The Chairman of the Deacons and Treasurer will serve as trustees by virtue of their position. Additionally, the church shall elect at least one additional trustee as needed to hold in trust the church's property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures are required. The trustees will be responsible for coordinating audits of the financial records. Trustees shall serve until they transfer from the area, resign, or are unable to serve for any other reason or by church action.

## **ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS**

Changes in the constitution may be made at any regular business meeting of the church provided that each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous regularly scheduled business meeting. Copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of all members present.

## **ARTICLE VII. DISSOLUTION**

If at any time in the providence of Almighty God there is no reason for or possibility of the continued existence of Aviano Baptist Church, closure shall be by a two thirds vote of the existing membership at that time. Assets possessed by the church at that time will be donated in whole or in part to either the IBC or other organization(s) as determined by a majority of the membership as it exists at that time.

# **BYLAWS**

## **I - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

### Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government of all phases

of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

## Section 2. Admission of Members

Any person 18 years of age or older may be a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates will be voted on by the Church Council at any regularly scheduled meeting in any of the following ways:

1. By Baptism - Any person who confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and who is in essential agreement with the doctrine and practice of this church may be received into the fellowship of the congregation following baptism by immersion.
2. By Letter - A person who is in substantial agreement with the doctrine and practice of this church may be received by letter of commendation from any other church of like-faith.
3. By Statement of Faith - A believer of worthy character who has formerly been a member of a church of like-faith and who, for a sufficient reason, cannot present a letter from that church but who is in substantial agreement with the faith and practice of this church may be received upon statement of Christian faith.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the Church Council within thirty days. A three-fourths vote of the Church Council shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

## Section 3. Associate Membership

The transient nature of the English-speaking community often means persons of other denominations wish to be a part of a local church without changing their denominational affiliation. Associates that are born-again believers may be received upon recommendation of the pastor and/or deacons. They will be voted on by the Church Council at regularly scheduled meeting.

Associate members may serve in the church as needed, except in areas where differences in doctrinal positions may be evident. Associate members may not serve as Pastor, deacons, main or lead adult/youth teachers, nor serve on the constitution committee. They may serve as main teachers in the Children's Ministry provided they have signed the Church's Statement of Faith to indicate their agreement to abide by it in all teaching settings. Associate Members are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of church life, but may not vote in church business matters.

## Section 4. Membership Class

Those desiring membership are expected to attend a Membership Class prior to being presented to the Church Council for a membership decision. These classes will be offered at regular intervals and can be conducted individually if needed.

## Section 5. Voting Rights of Membership

Every full member of this church is entitled to vote at all elections and all questions submitted to the church provided the member is present at the time of voting.

#### Section 6. Non-Resident

A member shall be placed on the non-resident church roll when transferred away from commutable church distance. Non-resident members shall be removed from the roll of the church after 12 months unless removed earlier by letter.

#### Section 7. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death of the member
2. Letter of transfer to another church of like faith
3. Exclusion by action of this church
4. Resignation by the individual.

#### Section 8. Church Discipline

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members towards one another should be guarded by concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exist which cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor, the deacons, and the church body will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem (Matthew 18:15-17). If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

## **II – SUPPORT STAFF**

### Section 1. Church Support Staff

1. The church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need. Job description shall be written when the need for additional staff members is determined. Vocational ministerial staff members other than the pastor shall be recommended to the church by an appropriate committee appointed by the church and will be employed by church action.
2. Support staff, such as secretaries, custodians, and any other individual employed by the church other than vocational ministers, will be recommended to the

Church Council by the pastor or deacons for approval. Church staff members shall give at least two weeks notice prior to resignation.

#### Section 2. Church Clerk/Secretary

The church clerk shall keep a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms.

The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted on by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings when such notice is necessary, as indicated by these bylaws.

Service as the church clerk is generally a duty of the church secretary. If the secretary is unwilling or unable to perform the duties of church clerk, a clerk will be appointed by the Church Council.

#### Section 3. Treasurer

It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers, approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, or things of value received by the church. The treasurer shall keep at all times an itemized account of receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The financial records shall be audited annually. The treasurer will submit a financial report to the Church Council at all regular meetings.

### **III - COMMITTEES AND COORDINATING GROUPS**

#### Section 1. Church Council

The Church Council shall consist of the Pastor, the Chairman of Deacons, Church Clerk, Treasurer, Directors of all ministries and programs, and all committee chairmen.

The Church Council will be delegated the authority to make all decisions of the church except matters outlined below that must be decided in a business meeting.

The Church Council shall seek to correlate and coordinate the activities and organizations of the church. It shall prepare a monthly calendar of activities for the entire church program. The council shall meet at least quarterly and all meetings shall be advertised.

The Church Clerk will serve as Council Secretary and will maintain a record of all meetings of the Church Council.

#### Section 2. Constitution Committee

A Constitution Committee will be formed as needed. The committee shall consist of: The Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons, and at least two persons elected by the church. Candidates for the constitution committee will be presented to the church by the Church Council after coordinating with the pastor. These candidates must be:

A born again baptized believer and a member of the Aviano Baptist Church for one year. This requirement may be shortened to (6) months if the candidate was an active member of an International Baptist Church for one year or more prior to joining Aviano Baptist Church. The candidate must be committed to the doctrines and policies of the church and have a working knowledge of Baptist doctrines and policy.

This committee shall review all proposed changes to the constitution prior to presenting them to the church with a recommendation. Any member who would like to propose a constitutional change shall submit their proposal to this committee. The proposed change should only be discussed in the congregation after it has been properly presented for consideration by the constitution committee at a regularly scheduled business meeting. The constitution committee shall review the constitution periodically and submit changes necessary for clarity and to meet the needs of the church body.

Any matters requiring constitution interpretation shall be decided by the pastor and deacons.

### Section 3. Personnel Committee

The deacons will serve as the Personnel Committee in order to administer employed support personnel. Their work includes such areas as determining support staff needs, personal interviews, salaries, benefits, other compensations, policies, and job descriptions, making such recommendations to the church. Once a support position has been recommended to and created by the church in a business meeting, the Personnel Committee will have the authority to administer said position, through both hiring and termination.

### Section 4. Missions Committee

The Missions (or Outreach) Committee should be comprised of five people but can function with a minimum of three. This committee is charged with the responsibility of considering ways to involve the church in mission activity both at home and abroad whether through supporting financially or actively participating in mission trips and/or projects. When requests for mission activity is received by the church, these requests will be forwarded to this committee for initial consideration. Where the committee deems a request to be worthy and practical for the church, they will bring that request to the next Church Council meeting for final consideration, approval or disapproval.

## **IV PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS**

### Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church supervision. All officers are to be elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

### Section 2. Discipleship Ministry

There shall be a Discipleship Ministry, divided into departments and classes for all ages, and conducted under the direction of the pastor and Church Council for the study of God's word.



The tasks of the Discipleship Ministry shall be to teach the Biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, and equip Christians to carry out fully the Great Commission of Christ, both through personal growth and evangelism.

### Section 3. Ministry Teams

Ministry Teams shall be formed and operated as needed to fulfill the mission and vision of the church and to minister to the church body and community. Such ministries will fall under the direction of the Church Council.

## **V - ORDINANCES**

### Section 1. Baptism

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
2. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whomever the church shall authorize. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for, and observance of baptism.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
4. A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or deacons.

### Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

1. The Lord's Supper shall be observed in worship services, as desired by the pastor and deacons.
2. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly, as scheduled by the pastor and deacons.
3. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations and the administration of the Lord's Supper.

## **VI - CHURCH MEETINGS**

### Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, and at other times as deemed necessary by the pastor or deacons, for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of the Almighty God. These services will be open for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

### Section 2. Special Services

Revival services and special services, such as Vacation Bible School and other church services, which are essential in the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be placed on the church calendar.

### Section 3. Business Meetings

The church must hold church-wide business conferences for the specific purposes of: calling a pastor or any other paid member of the ministerial staff, dismissing a pastor or any other paid member of the ministerial staff, electing individuals to serve in the deacon ministry of the church, electing trustees to conduct the official business of the church, approving annual budgets, purchase, rental, change or sale of real estate property.

The church may hold church-wide business conferences at any time the Church Council deems it necessary to do so. Any committee or ministry of the church having a desire for a business conference may bring their request to the Church Council for approval.

Church members who have matters they feel should be brought before a church-wide business conference may bring those matters to the ministry or committee responsible for action on such matters and ask them to bring the matter to the Church Council for consideration.

### Section 4. Quorum

The quorum consists of ten (10) percent of resident, active members.

### Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of this church.

## **VII. AMENDMENTS**

Changes to the bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church provided that each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous regularly scheduled business meeting. Copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.