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| ***BYLAWS*** |
| ***SWEET HOME BAPTIST CHURCH******OF ROUND ROCK*** |
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| **REVISED APRIL 2010** |

**BYLAWS OF**

**THE SWEET HOME BAPTIST CHURCH OF ROUND ROCK**

**Preamble**

*We, the members of Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock, in order to promote a more perfect union among ourselves and to preserve the spirit of solidarity and unity among all our members, do, in the presence of God, hereby enact and establish these Bylaws for the governance of our members.*

**Article I**

**NAME of the church and principal office**

Section I: The name of this nonprofit corporation shall be known as and referred to as the Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock.

1.1 All references to the “Church” herein shall mean Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock.

1.2 The principal office of the Church shall be physically located in Williamson County, in the State of Texas, at 3210 Sunrise Road, Round Rock, Texas, 78665.

1.3 The mailing address of the Church shall be Post Office Box 1690, Round Rock, Texas, 78680.

1.4 The Church shall have such other offices, either within or without the State of Texas, as the Elders may designate or as the affairs of the Church may require.

Section II: Registered Agent

2.1 The Church shall have and continuously maintain in the State of Texas a registered agent whose office or address is identical with the principal office of the Church, as required by the Texas Non-profit Corporation Act.

2.2 The address of the registered agent and the principal office of the corporation may be changed from time to time by the Elders who shall file the appropriate documents with the Secretary of the State of Texas.

# ARTICLE II

# PURPOSE and goals of the church

Section I: Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock shall maintain the right to govern its own affairs.

 1.1 Our purpose shall be unhampered by the restrictions and decisions of other churches or denominations that would determine the ministry and message of our church.

 2.1 This church shall recognize the benefit of cooperation with other churches for fellowship, world missions, community development, and corporate witness to the unsaved world.

Section II: Purpose

 2.1 We believe that the Bible is God’s holy and inspired word, and our purpose shall be to draw from the Scriptures the principles that determine our beliefs and practices.

 2.2 It shall be the Word of God rather than the word of men that ultimately directs our church.

 2.3 The purpose of Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock shall be to glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

 2.4 Our mission statement shall be as follows: We exist to Build Soldiers, to Reach Sinners, to Resemble the Savior.

Section III: Our goals shall be accomplished by focusing on the four basic areas of Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, and Ministry.

 3.1 In Worship, we shall provide an atmosphere that initiates praise.

 3.1.1 Worship is the response to a perceived presence of God, and is one of the most vital functions of the church.

 3.1.2 Worship occurs when we attribute to God the worth for which He is worthy.

 3.1.3 True worship releases the life changing power of God in our lives.

 3.2 In Evangelism, we shall fulfill Christ’s commission to the body to bring men, women, and children to know and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We shall prepare members of the body to carry out this great task by discipling them through the study and application of His word in their lives.

 3.3 In Discipleship, we shall provide ongoing intensive training and support for members to live by God’s principles as stated in the Word.

 3.3.1 We shall equip members with practical directions from God’s Word.

 3.3.2 Discipleship shall not be an option for the church or a believer.

 3.3.3 The Great Commission states that we shall “teach.”

 3.4 In Mission, we shall provide ministry (service), both within the church and outside the church, as a part of our outreach locally and abroad as God shall direct.

 3.4.1 We shall provide assistance, first with physical needs and then with spiritual enrichment.

 3.4.2 We shall follow Christ’s example, as presented in the Gospel, by first dealing with the physical needs of the people.

**ARTICLE III**

**DOCTRINE**

Section I: What We Believe

1.1 The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and shall be the basis for our statement of faith.

1.2 The church shall subscribe to the doctrinal statement of the “Baptist Faith and Message” as found below.

1.3 We shall bind ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the Good News of salvation to lost mankind.

Section II: The Baptist Statement of Faith and Message

2.1 The "Statement of Faith," which this church shall embrace, preach and defend, is specifically set forth in The Baptist Faith and Message, Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000.

2.2 The "Statement of Faith" herein set forth shall not be changed or diminished.

Section III: Statement of Faith

3.1 The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man.

 3.1.1 The Holy Bible a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.

 3.1.2 All Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried.

 3.1.3 All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

 3.2 There is one and only one living and true God.

 3.2.1 God is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe.

 3.2.2 God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections.

 3.2.3 God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures.

 3.2.4 To God we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.

 3.3 The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

 3.4 The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine.

 3.4.1 He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures.

 3.4.2 Through illumination, He enables men to understand truth.

 3.4.3 He exalts Christ.

 3.4.4 He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

 3.4.5 He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration, He baptizes every believer into the body of Christ.

 3.4.6 He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they *serve* God through His church.

 3.4.7 He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption.

 3.4.8 His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ.

 3.4.9 He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

 3.5 Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image.

 3.5.1 He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation.

 3.5.2 In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice, man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan, man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherits a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation.

 3.5.3 Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God.

 3.5.4 The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Section IV: Covenant of Existence

 4.1 The covenants or agreements by which this church shall exist as a distinct body and of which every member shall accept, shall be as follows:

 4.1.1 Acknowledging Jesus Christ to be our Saviour and Lord, and submitting to the authority of the Holy Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice, and recognizing the privilege and duty of uniting ourselves for Christian fellowship, the enjoyment of Christian ordinances, the public worship of God, and the advancement of His church on earth, we do now, in the sight of God and invoking His blessing, solemnly covenant and agree with each other to associate ourselves as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as warranted by the Word of God.

 4.1.2 We shall agree to maintain the teaching and the preaching of the Word of God, to submit ourselves to the orderly administration of the affairs of the church and to walk together in brotherly love.

 4.1.3 This we shall do all things, depending on the aid of our Heavenly Father, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for our salvation, and of Jesus Christ who has redeemed us with His blood, and of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Guide.

 4.2 Salvation shall involve the redemption of the whole man, and shall be offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense, salvation shall include regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.

 4.2.1 Regeneration, or the new birth, shall be a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It shall be a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

 Repentance and faith shall be inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance shall be a genuine turning from sin toward God.

 Faith shall be the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

 4.2.2 Justification shall be God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

 4.2.3 Sanctification shall be the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace shall continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

 4.2.4 Glorification shall be the culmination of salvation and shall be the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

 4.3 There shall be no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

 4.4 Election shall be the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinner.

 4.4.1 It shall be consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end.

 4.4.2 It shall be the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and His infinite wisdom, holiness, and His unchanging nature.

 4.4.3 It shall exclude boasting and shall promote humility.

 4.5 All true believers shall endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, shall never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through, neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair theirgraces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Section V: Church Autonomy

 5.1 A New Testament church of theLord Jesus Christ shall be an autonomous local congregation of *baptized believers,* associated by covenant in thefaith and fellowship of the gospel.

 5.1.1 It shall observe the two ordinances of Christ, as stipulated in Article VIII of these Bylaws.

 5.1.2 It shall be governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word.

 5.1.3 It shall seek to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

 5.2 Each congregation shall operate under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member shall be responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord.

 5.3 Its scriptural officers shall be pastors, elders, and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor shall be limited to men as *qualified by Scripture.*

 5.4 The New Testament speaks of the church as the body of Christ, which shall include the redeemed of all the ages, and the believers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

Section VI: Baptism

 6.1 Christian baptism shall be the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

 6.1.1 It shall be an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in the newness of life in Christ Jesus.

 6.1.2 It shall be a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead.

 6.1.3 Being a church ordinance, it shall be a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

Section VII: The Lord's Supper (Communion)

 7.1 The Lord’s Supper or Communion shall be a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Section VIII: The Lord’s Day

 8.1 The first day of the week shall be the Lord's Day.

 8.2 It shall be a Christian institution for regular observance. It shall commemorate the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private.

 8.3 Activities on the Lord's Day shall be commensurate' with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Section IX: The Kingdom of God

 9.1 The Kingdom of God shall include both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King.

 9.2 The Kingdom shall be the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ.

 9.3 Christians shall pray and labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth.

 9.4 The full consummation of the Kingdom shall await the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Section X: Christ’s Return

 10.1 God, in His own time and in His own way, shall bring the world to its appropriate end.

 10.2 According to His promise, Jesus Christ shall return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness.

 10.3 The unrighteous shall be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies, shall receive their reward and shall dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Section XI: The Great Commission

 11.1 It shall be the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations.

 11.2 The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit shall mean the birth of love for others.

Section XII: The Great Commandment

 12.1 Missionary effort on the part of all shall rest upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ.

 12.2 The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It shall be the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness under girded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Section XIII: Christian Education

 13.1 Christianity shall be the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abides all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning shall be a part of our Christian heritage.

 13.2 The new birth shall open all human faculties and shall create a thirst for knowledge. The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ shall be to co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and shall receive along with these the liberal support of the churches.

 13.3 An adequate system of Christian education shall be necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

 13.4 InChristian education, there shall be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life shall be limited and never absolute.

 13.5 The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary shall be limited by the pre­eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

**ARTICLE IV**

**Stewardship**

Section I: God shall be the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual. All that we shall have and that we are we shall owe to Him.

 1.1 Christians shall have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions.

 1.2 Christians shall be under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and shall recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others.

 1.3 According to the Scriptures, Christians shall contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Section II: Christ's people shall, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God.

 2.1 Such organizations shall have no authority over one another or over the churches. They shall be voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner.

 2.2 Members of New Testament churches shall cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

 2.3 Christian unity in the New Testament sense shall be spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people.

 2.4 Christian denominations shall prosper, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

**ARTICLE V**

**The Christian and the Social Order**

Section I: All Christians shall be under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in their lives and in human society.

 1.1 Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men shallbe truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ.

 1.2 In the spirit of Christ, Christians shall oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography.

 1.3 We shall work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick.

 1.4 We shall speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

 1.5 Every Christian shall seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love.

 1.6 In order to promote these ends, Christians shall be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Section II: It shall be the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness.

 2.1 In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ, they shall do all in their power to put an end to war.

 2.2 The true remedy for the war spirit shall be the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love.

 2.3 Christian people throughout the world shall pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Section III: God alone shall be Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it.

 3.1 Church and state shall be separate.

 3.2 The state shall owe to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom, no ecclesiastical group or denomination shall be favored by the state more than others.

 3.3 Civil government being ordained of God, Christians shall have a duty to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God.

 3.4 The church shall not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ alone shall be consulted for spiritual means in the pursuit of its ends.

 3.5 The state shall have no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind.

 3.6 The state shall have no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion.

 3.7 A free church in a free state shall be the Christian ideal, and this shall imply the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Section IV: Marriage and Family

 4.1 God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It shall be composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

 4.2 Marriage shall be the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It shall be God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

 4.3 The husband and wife shall be of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship shall model the way God relates to His people.

 4.4 A husband shall love his wife as Christ loved the church. He shall have the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family.

 4.5 A wife shall submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church shall willingly submit to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus shall be equal to him, shall have the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

 4.6 Children, from the moment of conception, shall be a blessing and heritage from the Lord.

 4.7 Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage.

 4.8 Parents shall teach their children spiritual and moral values and shall lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth.

 4.9 Children shall honor and obey their parents.

**ARTICLE VI**

**ASSOCIATIONS**

Section I: The Associations to which this church shall voluntarily be aligned are the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and the St. John District Regular Baptist Association.

**ARTICLE VII**

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

Section I: Qualifications for Membership

1.1 The membership of this church shall be composed of those persons whose names appear in the records of the church.

1.2 Membership in the church shall be acquired by affirmation of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the completion of the New Membership Orientation classes.

1.3 After these qualifications are met, all new members completing New Member Orientation classes shall be extended the right hand of fellowship signifying membership.

1.4 The New Membership Completion Certificates shall beavailable the week following the completion of the last New Member Orientation class.

Section II: Membership Rolls

 2.1 All persons whose names shall appear on the membership rolls of this church shall be considered members.

 2.2 Membership shall be classified as either active or inactive.

 2.2.1 Active member shall be those persons who have been in attendance at the church services for *at least* twenty-six (26) Sundays or more during the most recent 12-month period.

 2.2.2 Inactive members shall be those persons who have been in attendance at the church services for *less than* twenty-six Sundays during the most recent 12-month period.

 2.2.3 Those persons classified as inactive shall have no right of franchise and shall not be granted a letter of “good and regular standing,” nor shall they be eligible to vote on any matter before the church.

Section III: Responsibilities of Members

 3.1 Each member shall be responsible, as God enables, to do their part in the “work of service.”

 3.2 This shall mean, but not be limited to, the regular participation in the life and the services of the church, and shall include a voluntary, consistent contribution of financial support as the Lord shall prosper.

Section IV: Acceptance of Members

 4.1 Anyone who shall profess a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, shall give evidence of a change of heart, and shall declare themselves to be in accordance with the principles, practices, and doctrines of this church, shall become a member of this church.

 4.2 Candidates for membership shall be considered based upon one or more of the following:

 4.2.1 Baptism by “total body immersion” upon confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

 4.2.2 By letter from any church of similar faith and order.

 4.2.3 By Christian experience if the candidate has previously been immersed as a believer.

 4.2.4 By restoration, upon personal confession, or if applicable, confession of the cause for the church’s former dismissal.

Section V: Rights and Responsibilities of Members

 5.1 New members, after having received the right hand of fellowship, shall be entitled to participate in the various ministries of the church.

 5.2 Members in good standing shall be eligible for consideration by the Senior Pastor, Elders, staff, and Deacons for leadership and participation in the ministries of the church.

 5.3 Members shall be expected to participate in the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as administered by the church.

 5.4 Members shall respect the Senior Pastor, Elders, staff, Deacons, and the officers of the church.

 5.4.1 Members shall cooperate with the Senior Pastor, Elders, staff, Deacons, and officers to the best of their ability in every project for the advancement of the work of the Church.

 5.4.2 Members shall abide by the Bylaws of this Church.

 5.5 Members shall live exemplary Christian lives, abstain from worldly practices, faithfully attend the services of this church, and faithfully put into practice the principles of the church covenant.

Section VI: Discipline of Members

 6.1 The matter of discipline of members shall be in the hands of the Senior Pastor and the Elders.

 6.2 In the case of expulsion from the membership, final action shall be taken by the church membership.

 6.3 No member shall be expelled until every effort has been made, including but not limited to, personal visits to reclaim that person for Christ and for the church.

 6.5 Members failing to demonstrate an interest in the church for at least ninety days without legitimate excuse (such “excuse” shall be approved by the Senior Pastor and Elders) shall be placed on the inactive list.

 Lack of interest in the church shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

 6.5.1 Absence from the Sunday Worship Services, as defined in Article VII, Section II.

 6.5.2 Absence from the Wednesday Night Live Bible Study as defined in Article VII, Section II.

 6.5.3 Lack of communication with the Senior Pastor, Elders, staff, Deacons, or church in writing regarding absence.

 6.5.4 Lack of financial support (tithes or offerings).

 6.5.5 Lack of participation in the work of the church through its various ministries denoting visibility.

 6.6 If a member remains inactive and shows no evidence of interest in this church for ninety days or more, such member shall be removed from the church rolls and subject to the stipulations set forth in Article VII, Section VII. Such members shall be notified by letter of their removal from the church rolls.

 6.7 Ministry leaders shall attempt to communicate with inactive members by letter, telephone, email, and personal visits to restore them to active membership within the Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock.

 6.8 Any member who willfully continues to display blatant, sinful conduct and/or erroneous teaching shall be disciplined by the Pastor and the Elders.

Section VII: Termination of Members

 7.1 Membership shall be terminated for the following reasons:

 7.1.1 Death of a member.

 7.1.2 Decision of the member to unite with another church.

 7.1.3 Dismissal by action of the Senior Pastor, Elders, and the church body for the persistent violation of church rules.

 7.1.4 Disruption of church Worship Services, conferences, and meetings.

 7.1.5 Participation in discussion groups on church premises, which seek to disrupt the harmony and unity between the leadership and the church.

 7.1.6 Securing legal or other outside assistance in solving matters within Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock without approval from the Senior Pastor and the Elders.

 7.1.7 Lack of remorse and repentance for behavior unbecoming a Christian brother or sister in Christ.

 7.1.8 Participation in cultic behavior and activities, as determined by the Senior Pastor and the Elders.

 7.2 Any charge brought against any member or officer of the church shall be submitted in writing to the Senior Pastor and the Advisory Council of the Elders and shall be duly signed by the accuser.

 7.2.1 Before a charge can be brought against a member or officer of the Church, the accuser shall make personal contact with the accused regarding the allegations in writing.

 7.2.2 Reconciliation shall be pursued and if the matter is not resolved, the issues shall immediately be brought to the Senior Pastor and the Advisory Council of the Elders.

 7.2.3 Interested parties shall comply with Matthew 18:15-17, I Timothy 5:19, 1 Corinthians 14:40, and Proverbs 14:12.

*Matthew 18:15-17, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee two or more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican”.*

*I Timothy 5:19, “against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses”.*

*I Corinthians 14:”40, “Let all things be done decently and in order”.*

*Proverbs 14:12, “There is a way seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”.*

 7.3 It shall be the duty of the Senior Pastor and the Advisory Council of the Elders to receive charges against members for unchristian conduct.

 7.4 If the allegations are supported by credible evidence and are in compliance with Scripture, then the appropriate action that shall be taken shall include, but not be limited to:

 7.4.1 The complete review all allegations by designated leadership (Senior Pastor and the Elders).

 7.4.2 The temporary or permanent dismissal from leadership responsibilities for the accused.

 7.4.3 A verbal warning, a letter of caution, or a private reprimand.

Section VIII: Restoration of Fellowship

 8.1 A member shall request (in writing) to be restored to active membership within the Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock by meeting the following requirements:

 8.1.1 Repentance of the sin and violation against the church.

 8.1.2 Submission of a letter of apology to the church.

 8.1.3 Commitment to personal reformation.

Section IX: New Member Orientation

 9.1 New members shall attend, participate in, and complete the Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock New Member Orientation classes.

 9.2 New members shall receive the New Member Orientation Guide and other appropriate church materials upon uniting with the church.

 9.3 New Member Orientation classes shall be completed and certification shall be granted by the New Member Orientation leadership in order to teach in Christian Education or to be considered for participation in any ministry.

 9.4 Any exceptions to these stipulations shall require the special approval of the Senior Pastor.

**ARTICLE VIII**

**ORDINANCES**

Section I: Baptism

 1.1 Those persons professing saving faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and desiring to become members of this church shall, by the Senior Pastor or some person authorized by the church, be (or have previously been) immersed in water in accordance with Scriptural teaching.

 1.2 Baptism by immersion shall be a perquisite to church membership.

Section II: The Lord’s Supper

 2.1 The Lord’s Supper (Communion) shall be served to the assembled church by the Senior Pastor, staff, Elders and Deacons on the 1st Sunday of each month and at the discretion of the Senior Pastor on other occasions.

 2.2 The Senior Pastor shall frequently state the Scriptural order of the Lord’s Supper and explain the meaning of the ordinance.

 2.3 The Lord’s Supper shall be restricted to those individuals professing a saving faith in Jesus Christ and having been baptized accordingly.

**ARTICLE IX**

**Officers, senior PASTOR, staff, and Advisory Councils**

Section I: The Officers

 1.1 The officers of the church shall consist of the Senior Pastor, the Elders, and other such persons that the Senior Pastor shall designate.

Section II: The Senior Pastor

 2.1 In the selection of the Senior Pastor, the Elders shall be guided by the scriptural qualifications as outlined in Article X.

 2.2 The Senior Pastor shall be a man.

Section III: Church Staff

 3.1 This Senior Pastor shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need.

 3.2 A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined.

Section IV: Elders

4.1 Qualifications of the Elders

 4.1.1 Qualifications of the Elders shall be in accordance with the stipulation of Article X of these Bylaws and with the guidelines established in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9:

 4.2 Purpose, Powers, and Authority

###  4.2.1 Government

a) The Elders or their qualified appointees, who shall be ultimately responsible to the Elders, shall oversee the business activities and affairs of the church.

b) As the church holds the belief that the New Testament places the burden of oversight on a plurality of Elders, the Elders shall oversee the congregation and make recommendations with regard to the affairs, functions, direction, and business of the church.

c) These recommendations shall reflect a clear biblical perspective and the best interest of the Church.

d) The Elders, as prescribed in Article IX, Section 4.2.3, shall oversee to execution of documents, deeds, contracts, and any other legal documents in the name and on behalf of the Church.

###  4.2.2 Pulpit Substitution

The Elders shall make provisions for pulpit substitution if the Senior Pastor is unable to do so, and in the absence of the Senior Pastor’s designated appointee.

###  4.2.3 Funds of the Church

The Elders shall be responsible for oversight of all church funds, with the exception of operational expenses. The responsibility for the operational expenses shall be delegated by the Elders to the Senior Pastor and designated staff. However, any operational expenses outside of normal church-related expenses in excess of $5,000 shall require notification to the Elders in accordance with the goals and purposes of the Church, as stated in Article II of these Bylaws. Operational expenses shall not include such things as investments, land purchases, building leases, and other non-ministry related activities. In the absence, inability to serve, or vacancy of the Senior Pastor, the responsibility for operational expenses shall devolve to the Elders, in accordance with the stipulations of Article IX, Section 4.2.1 of these Bylaws.

###  4.2.4 Salaries, Remuneration, and Expenses

a) In the absence of the Senior Pastor, the Elders shall set and structure the guidelines to determine the salaries, wages, and benefits for all pastors, staff, and employees of the Church.

b) In the absence of the Senior Pastor, the Elders shall give final approval for all salaries, wages, and benefits.

c) The Elders shall abstain from any vote pertaining to themselves or their immediate family.

###  4.2.5 Conservation of Church Property

The Elders shall make provisions for the conservation and maintenance of all the property of the Church by ensuring that appropriate staffing is in place to handle such responsibility.

 4.3 Spiritual Oversight

 4.3.1 The Elders shall be responsible for assisting and supporting the Senior Pastor.

 4.3.2 The Elders shall provide the necessary resources for him to effectively lead the ministry of the Church and ensure that the spiritual purposes of the Church are realized, as set forth in Articles II and III.

 4.4 Church Administration

 4.4.1 The church shall be Senior Pastor led, with Elder’s having a designated area of responsibility in which to oversee as assigned by the Senior Pastor.

 4.4.2 The Senior Pastor shall represent the Elders in the development and administration of the programs of the Church.

 4.4.3 Such programs shall be in accordance with the purpose and goals of the Church as defined in Articles II and III of these Bylaws.

 4.5 Elder Composition and Term of Office

 4.5.1 Number of Elders

 The number of Elders shall be no less than five and no more than nine, including the Senior Pastor.

###  4.5.2 Term of Office

a) The term of office for an Elder shall be two years.

b) An Elder may succeed himself in office.

c) The Senior Pastor shall consider the recommendation from the Elders regarding the nomination of members to the Elders, with the exception of the Senior Pastor, whose term shall be continuous.

###  4.6 Nomination, Appointment, and Affirmation

###  4.6.1 Nomination of Elders

a) All nominations of men to be considered for the office of Elder shall come from the Senior Pastor.

b) The Senior Pastor shall have the responsibility of assessing the qualifications of each prospective candidate, (as prescribed in Article IX, Section IV), making selections, and giving oversight to the training of those men.

 4.6.2 Appointment of Elders

a) Upon the successful completion of the Elder’s training program, each candidate shall be presented to the Elders as a qualified candidate for the office of Elder.

b) Upon approval by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Elders present at a meeting of the Elders, provided a quorum is present, each candidate shall be presented before the congregation.

 4.6.3 Affirmation of Elders

a) The Elders shall have a specified period of time (exact amount of time will be communicated at the time in which the names are presented) to bring forward to the Elders any cause for denial of office, whether unfaithfulness, unfitness, or other cause that would prevent a candidate from faithfully serving in the office of Elder.

b) After the specified time period, the candidate shall be presented to the congregation for their affirmation.

###  4.7 Quorum of the Elders

 4.7.1 The quorum necessary to conduct the business of the Elders shall be two-thirds of the members of the Elders.

 4.7.2 The proxy of an Elder shall not constitute an attendance for the purpose of a quorum.

 4.7.3 If a meeting does not contain a quorum, no official business of the Elders may be conducted or transacted. In addition, no minutes shall be recorded on any proceedings.

###  4.8 Voting of the Elders

 4.8.1 Voting

Unless otherwise required by these Bylaws, a simple majority vote of the Elders present at any meeting of the Elders, provided a quorum is present, shall be required for the adoption of any motion.

 4.8.2 Proxy

a) An Elder may vote by proxy executed in writing and filed with the Chairman of the Elders before the meeting is called to order; however, such proxy shall not be counted toward the majority attendance required for a quorum.

b) No proxy shall be valid beyond the meeting for which it was filed.

###  4.9 Meetings of the Elders

###  4.9.1 Regular Meetings

There shall not be *less than* one regular monthly meeting of the Elders.

###  4.9.2 Special Meetings

a) The Chairman of the Elders shall call a special meeting of the Elders when necessary or expedient.

b) In the absence of the Chairman, or in the event of the disability, inability to serve, or removal of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman of the Elders shall call a special meeting of the Elders when necessary or expedient.

c) At the discretion of the Elders, a member or members of the congregation may address the Elders in person on a specific issue.

 4.9.3 Actions of the Elders without Meeting

a) Any action of the Elders, with exception of the removal of the Senior Pastor, Elder, or Deacon from office, may be taken without a meeting if unanimous consent shall be reached among all members of the Elders entitled to vote.

b) Action taken in this manner shall be recorded in the official minutes of the next meeting of the Elders.

 4.10 Records of Meetings

 4.10.1 Written records, resolutions, and minutes of the proceedings of the Elders shall be maintained at all times and shall be kept in the office of the registered agent for the Church or the office of the Director of Administrative Services, whose office or address is identical with the principal office of the Church as prescribed in Article I.

 4.10.2 The Elders shall appoint one of its members to the office of Secretary of the Elders.

 4.10.3 The Secretary shall be responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the written records, resolutions, and minutes of the proceedings of the Elders.

###  4.11 Resignation and Dismissal of Elders

 4.11.1 Resignation of Elders

a) The resignation of an Elder from office shall be in writing, subscribed by him, and submitted to the Elders.

 b) If personal illness, infirmity, or inability to serve, prevents the resigning Elder from fulfilling this responsibility, another Elder may act on his behalf in submitting his resignation from office.

###  4.11.2 Dismissal of an Elder other than the Senior Pastor

a) If, for any reason, whether for unfaithfulness in any area, unfitness, or other cause, the Elders at a properly held meeting shall deem it necessary or desirable to remove an Elder from office, the Elders at such meeting shall select and appoint a committee of three Elders to inquire into, investigate, and examine the validity of the reasons or cause.

b) After such inquiry, the committee shall make a written report of its recommended action to the Elders.

c) If the committee recommends removal of the investigated Elder from office, the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Elders present at a meeting of the Elders, provided a quorum is present, shall be necessary to remove such Elder from office.

d) Before such vote is taken, the Elders shall allow the Elder to appear and speak to the Elders in his own defense.

###  4.12 Vacancies on the Elders

 4.12.1 When a vacancy (other than the Chairman) occurs on the Elders, such vacancy shall be filled according to the procedures for nomination, appointment, and election of Elders set forth in Article IX, Section IV, of these Bylaws.

###  4.13 Officers of the Elders

###  4.13.1 Chairman

 a) The Senior Pastor shall serve as the Chairman of the Elders.

b) The Chairman shall preside over all meetings of the Elders and of all congregational business meetings and shall set the agenda for all Elders meetings.

c) The same person shall not hold the offices of the Chairman and Secretary.

###  4.13.2 Vice-Chairman

a) The Vice-Chairman shall preside over the meetings of the Elders in the absence of the Chairman or when designated by the Chairman.

b) He shall be authorized by the Chairman to act in the Chairman’s place on his behalf as an *ex-officio* member of any committee designated by the Chairman.

c) The Chairman shall appoint an Elder to serve as the Vice-Chairman. The term of office for the Vice-Chairman shall be two years.

d) The Vice-Chairman may succeed himself in office.

###  4.14 Responsibilities of the Elders

 4.14.1 Community Liaison and Outreach Elder

 a) Serves as liaison between the SHBCRR and the community.

b) Serves and give oversight for leading, planning, and coordinating the interface of the needs of the community with the SHBCRR and other community leaders in an effort to serve the community at large.

c) Identifies specific target needs in our community.

d) Identifies specific targets for outreach and evangelism opportunities in the community.

e) Prays daily that SHBCRR lives out the Great Commission.

###  4.14.2 Deacons Liaison and Congregational Care Elder

 a) Gives oversight to the Deacon Ministry according to Acts 6.

b) Works hand-in hand with the Chairman of the Deacons in developing the deacons and deacons in training.

 c) Responsible for congregational care.

d) Responsible for assisting in the development of workshops, seminars, etc., to help train both the deacons and the deacons in training.

 e) Always be aware of the overall climate of the church.

 4.14.3 Finance and Staff Liaison Elder

 a) Serve as liaison for Finance Committee.

b) Serves with the Financial Director in supplying Finance Report to other Elders.

 c) Deals with tax issues along with Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

d) Liaison for dealing with staff issues with respect to interviewing for staff vacancies (will be involved and have input, but final decision will be made by the Chairman of the Elders), counseling staff members regarding areas of staff concern, counseling staff members with regard to disciplinary issues and action to be taken, and conflict resolution.

e) Meets quarterly with Chairman of the Elders to be updated on the spiritual direction of the Church and staff.

f) Meets quarterly with CFO, Director of Administrative Services, and Chairman of the Elders to be updated on the financial climate of the church.

 4.14.4 Fundraising and Special Projects Elder

a) Responsible for organizing, planning, and implementing major fundraising projects.

b) Responsible for providing educational materials to enlighten the congregation on financial management and financial planning.

 c) Serves as a resource for planning financial seminars and workshops.

d) Serves as a resource to the CFO and Director of Administrative Services.

 4.14.5 Pastoral Care Elder

Provides oversight for the financial care of the pastor and his family, including, but not limited to, compensation and retirement.

 4.14.6 Teaching Elder

Works with the Christian Education Ministry in the areas of discipleship training, New Member Orientation, educational workshops, and teaching.

###  4.15 Senior Pastor

###  4.15.1 Nomination of the Senior Pastor

The Elders shall seek candidates for the position of Senior Pastor.

 4.15.2 Election and Call of the Senior Pastor

a) After researching the candidates, a candidate for Senior Pastor shall be selected for nomination by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Elders present at a meeting of the Elders, provided a quorum is present.

b) A written notice shall be mailed to the Elders not less than seven days *prior to* said meeting date to announce this meeting.

c) Should the candidate not receive two-thirds vote of the Elders present, the matter shall be returned to the search process to seek other candidates.

d) If the selected nominee receives two-thirds vote of the Elders present, then the selected nominee shall be recommended to the congregation at a meeting called for that purpose.

e) At this meeting the selected nominee will tell the congregation about himself, and answer pre-selected questions. The selected nominee shall be elected by nine-tenths (90 percent) vote of those active members present at a congregational meeting called for the purpose of electing the Senior Pastor.

f) A written notice shall be mailed to the active members of the congregation not less than fourteen days *prior to* said meeting date to announce this meeting.

g) The Elders shall determine the method of voting.

h) Should the candidate not receive a (90%) of the vote of the active members of the congregation present, the matter shall be returned to the Elders to seek other candidates.

 i) Only active members age 18 and older shall be eligible to vote.

Section V: Deacons

5.1 Qualifications of Deacons

 5.1.1 Qualifications of Deacons shall be in accordance with the guidelines established in I Timothy 3:8-12, where it is written that Deacons are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, and not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.

 a) They must keep hold of the deep truth of the faith with a clear conscience.

 b) They must first be tested and then, if there is nothing against them, let them serve as Deacons.

 c) In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talker, but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

 d) A Deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

 e) This does not mean that a Deacon must necessarily be married, but if he is, he must be Scripturally married and be faithful to his own wife (Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; I Corinthians 7:1-40).

 5.2 Purpose of Deacons

 5.2.1 The purpose of the Deacons is to assist the Elders in serving the needs of the members of the church.

 5.2.2 Deacons function in light of the needs of the congregation and oversee the effective care of the flock and accomplish the ministries of the Church.

 5.2.3 The role of Deacon reflects the ultimate in spiritual greatness since Jesus said the true measure of greatness is in one being the greatest servant of all. This is the spirit that should mark the attitude of a Deacon (Matthew 20:26-28).

 5.3 Duties and Responsibilities of Deacons

 5.3.1 Deacons are to assist in meeting the spiritual, physical, material, and temporal needs of the members.

 5.3.2 Deacons are to serve as a support group to the Elders.

 5.3.3 Deacons are to guard the unity of the spirit within the church.

 5.3.4 Deacons are to perform other duties and responsibilities delegated and prescribed by the Senior Pastor and/or the Elders.

**ARTICLE X**

**LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE, AND JUDICIAL POWERS**

### Section I: Legislative Powers

1.1 The supreme governing body shall be the Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock.

1.2 The sole and supreme legislative body shall be the Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock and, as such, it shall have the power to enact legislation for the regulation of all matters pertaining to the Church, except those which are otherwise expressly provided for in these Bylaws.

 1.3 Only active members age 18 and older shall be eligible to vote on any matter before the church.

### Section II: Executive Powers

2.1 The executive powers of Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock shall be vested in the Senior Pastor, who shall be the Chief Executive Officer.

###  2.2 The responsibilities of the Senior Pastor shall include, but shall not be limited to the following:

 2.2.1 The Senior Pastor shall be the recognized leader of the church, under the leadership of Christ.

 2.2.2 He shall be responsible for providing general guidance to the church and oversight of the implementation of the policies established by the Elders.

 2.2.3 He shall be the Chairman of the Elders.

 2.2.4 As the chief executive officer of the church, the Senior Pastor shall have general oversight, coordination, administration, and operation of all programs and personnel of the church.

 2.2.5 It shall be the duty and obligation of the Senior Pastor to be the primary teacher of the Word of God.

 2.2.6 He shall oversee the spiritual ministry of the church, which shall include, but not be limited to, the administration of the church ordinances and direction of worship services.

 2.2.7 The Senior Pastor shall be an *ex-officio* member of each Church Advisory Council. He can attend any meeting of any group within the church.

 2.2.8 It shall be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor to be the primary spokesperson for the policies, goals, direction, vision, and ministry of the church to the members as well as to the broader community at large.

###  2.3 Dismissal of the Senior Pastor

 2.3.1 If a reason or cause arises, of unfaithfulness, unfitness, or non-compliance of these Bylaws, the Vice Chairman and another Elder selected will conduct a preliminary investigation of the allegations themselves by questioning the Senior Pastor and the party making the allegations. If through their investigation they determine that a valid reason or cause exists, the Vice Chairman will convene a properly held meeting with the Elders (in which the Vice-Chairman shall preside over) according to Article IX Section IV Subsection 4.9.2 to present the allegations to the Elders.

 2.3.2 The Senior Pastor is excluded from attending this properly held meeting of the Elders, and shall have no right to vote at such meeting.

 2.3.3 If the Elders deem it necessary for further review, the Elders at such meeting shall appoint a committee of a minimum of three Elder’s to conduct a thorough investigation, and examine the validity of the reason or cause.

2.3.4 After this investigation, the committee shall make a written report of its recommended action to the remaining Elders.

 2.3.5 If the committee recommends removal of the Senior Pastor from office, the Elders shall allow the Senior Pastor to appear and speak to the Elders in his own defense.

 2.3.6 If a valid reason or cause still exists according to Article X Section II, subsection 2.3.7 of these Bylaws after the Senior Pastor has appeared and spoken to the Elders in his own defense, then the Elders may vote to recommend removal of the Senior Pastor from office with the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present at a meeting of the Elders, provided a quorum is present.

 2.3.7 The vote shall be by secret ballot at a special meeting called for that purpose, with at least one week's advance notice of the meeting. Furthermore, the basis of this vote shall be based on the terms of any employment agreement, or for any of the following reasons:

 a) Falling into sinful and worldly practices without repentance.

 b) Engaging in conduct that could hinder the influence of the Church in its community.

 c) Teaching doctrines inconsistent with sound scriptural doctrine and practice.

 d) Neglect of duties

 e) Resignation

 f) Death or disability

 2.3.8 Recommendation for Dismissal

a) After a recommendation for dismissal by two-thirds vote by the Elders, a congregational meeting will be called for the purpose of considering the recommendation for dismissal. Once the Elder’s, and the Senior Pastor (if he so desires) present evidence of support, and witnesses to substantiate their recommendation. The Senior Pastor shall be dismissed or retained by a simple majority vote of those active members present at the congregational meeting.

b) A written notice shall be mailed to the active members of the congregation not less than fourteen days *prior to* said meeting date to announce this meeting.

c) The congregational meeting voting shall be by secret ballot.

d) Should a majority vote of the active members present oppose the recommendation for dismissal, the matter shall be resolved.

e) Only active members age 18 and older shall be eligible to vote.

Section III: Judicial Powers

The judicial powers of the Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock shall be vested in the Elders.

 3.1 Guidelines for Qualifications for Elders

The qualifications for Elders are spelled out in the Bible in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

 3.1.1 Being an Elder is defined as hard, but good work (I Timothy 3:1):

a) There must be a desire to be an Elder. This office should never be imposed. The desire involves a personal inner calling of God.

b) The office of bishop refers to being an Elder and serving at a local church. This does not necessarily refer to becoming a pastor, but to becoming an Elder, one of the Elders of a local church. A church should have more than one Elder, the pastor-teacher(s) being one (or some) of the Elders (Eph. 4:11; Acts 20:28).

c) It is a function which one desires. It must not be something that is thrust upon someone. There must be the desire for it. The desire is so strong that it becomes a passion in the good sense of the word.

d) One can have a passion to dominate others as part of an ego trip, or to serve others with the desire of helping them. No one should earnestly seek the office of an Elder-bishop unless he has a passion for altruistic service.

e) Being an Elder means work. “…he desireth a good work.” It is not a decorative office to be an Elder of a church. It is work, hard work that must be sought with a passion to serve. No one should seek to be an Elder who does not passionately desire to work at it, for it is a beautiful task of serving others.

 3.1.2 An Elder must be blameless (I Tim. 3:2):

a) The first qualification in I Timothy 3:2, is that he should be blameless and irreproachable.

b) This is the most comprehensive qualification of all. If one qualifies for this, all the other qualifications are specific details of character and behavior.

 3.1.3 An Elder must be unindictable (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6):

**a)** “One can be unindictable before a court of justice but can be blamable.

b) The first qualification in Titus 1:6 may very well preclude someone who has had a conviction in court on some moral charge or one who may have committed a crime but has not been discovered, therefore untried, but who, if discovered and tried, would be found guilty and therefore not “blameless” (I Tim. 3:2).

c) The stress in both these qualifications, blameless (I Timothy 3:2) and unindictable (Titus 1:6) requires an Elder to be clear of any possible blame in any area, and to be clear of any legal charge.

 3.1.4 An Elder must not be a womanizer.

a)This qualificationoccurs in both I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6, “the husband of one wife.”

b) This means that a man is to be faithful to his own wife and whether he is married or single, he is to be above reproach in his relationship with women. This is so that people will have full confidence in his dealing with other women and so that he would do nothing dishonoring to Christ.

c) This does not mean that an Elder necessarily must be married, but if he is, he must be Scripturally married and be faithful to his own wife (Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; I Corinthians 7:1-40).

 3.1.5 If an Elder has children, they must be faithful.

a)If an Elder has children under the legal age of consent (17 years and younger), they should be faithful, and should be believers.

b) This does not mean that he must have children, but if he has, and the children are still young and under his jurisdiction, unless they are faithful, he should not serve as an Elder. It is a different matter when the children are grown and are responsible for their own decisions. A father cannot be held responsible for the behavior of his adult children. Titus 1:6 furthermore adds that an Elder’s children be “not accused of riot or unruly.”

c) The family of an Elder must also be considered seriously. If the children who are under the authority of a father are accused of having gone astray or as not subjecting themselves to him, the otherwise qualified Elder should not seek to function as one.

 3.1.6 An Elder must be sober and temperate.

a)A bishop must be vigilant (and sober) I Timothy 3:2 (KJV).

b) Paul’s admonition to all believers is valid, especially to those who hold leadership roles in the church that they should abstain from wine. The use of wine is dangerous because it easily leads to excess.

 3.1.7 An Elder must have self-limiting freedom.

a)An Elder then must be one who has a healthy mind. The Greeks interpreted a sound mind as one that directed one’s actions in consideration of their consequences in regard not only to oneself, but also to others. He is free to act, but his sound mind tells him how to use his freedom of action.

b) An Elder, by virtue of his leadership in the church, should impose upon himself limitations on his action. His freedom must be limited by an altruistic consideration of how his actions affect others.

c) An Elder should be one who knows how to use his freedom, and takes measures to prevent the possibility of yielding himself to temptation.

 3.1.8 An Elder must be decent.

a)An Elder must be of good behavior.

b) An Elder should dress decently, decorously as part his behavior. The dress, too, must not be governed by the fashion of the world, which passeth away (I Cor. 7:31).

 3.1.9 An Elder must be hospitable.

a) “A bishop then must be … given to hospitality…” (I Timothy 3:2).

b) An Elder should take seriously the apostolic admonition in Hebrews 13:2, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares”.

 3.1.10 An Elder must be apt to teach.

a) “A bishop then must … apt to teach (I Tim 3:2). It includes not only innate capability, but also desire to teach.

b) Elders must be able to communicate the word of God clearly, according to the guidelines of Titus 1:9 (See Article X, Section 3.1.25).

 3.1.11 An Elder must not be quarrelsome.

a) “A bishop then mustbe … no striker… (I Timothy 3:3). An Elder, no matter what his particular function in the church, must not be a “striker.”

 3.1.12 An Elder must not be eager for dishonorable gain.

a) “A bishop thenmust be … not greedy of filthy lucre…” (I Timothy 3:3).

b) In his secular job or business, he should not be known as one who squeezes the last penny out of people. He is prohibited from dishonest profit that could cause the testimony of Jesus Christ to suffer.

c) An Elder may not try to exploit the needs of a local church in doing business with an indecent profit for himself.

 3.1.13 An Elder must be reasonably forbearing.

 a) “A bishop then must be ... patient…” (I Timothy 3:3).

b) An Elder should be a person who is fair, moderately forbearing, as he examines each case on its own merits instead of applying general rules without considering the circumstances of the situation.

c) An Elder should be a person who, instead of making a fight out of a certain situation, should rather show consideration and gentle understanding.

 3.1.14 An Elder must not be a brawler nor a fighter.

a) “A bishop then must be … not a brawler…” (I Timothy 3:3).

b) An Elder should be a person who is not contentious or disposed to fights and quarrels. Such a person disposed to fights and quarrels should never be appointed as an Elder.

 3.1.15 An Elder must not be a covetous or a lover of money.

 a) “A bishop then must be … not covetous” (I Timothy 2:3).

b) An Elder should not be one who wants more of what he has in spite of the fact that what he possesses has not satisfied him or one who craves for that which he does not have and would like to have, in spite of the fact that it has not satisfied others who have it.

 3.1.16 An Elder must be one who rules his house well.

a) “A bishop must then be … one that ruleth well his own house….” (I Timothy 3:4).

b) The function of the Elder is to rule. The local church is likened to a household. In the same manner that the children and the wife submit to the leadership of the father and the husband, so must the church submit to the Biblical leadership of the Elders. A man who cannot give proper leadership to his own family cannot give proper leadership to a congregation.

c) Just as the eldership of a father over his children should not to be authoritarian, but decently and prudently authoritative, so should the leadership of an Elder be in regard to the church.

d) An Elder’s behavior should inspire respect on the part of others. He should exhibit dignified leadership as a good father or leader in the management of his children at home and the people in the local church, causing them to understand their position in the family and to act in a proper manner.

e) Elders should lead in the local church so that believers not only obey certain laws imposed by the leaders, but also love the Lord Jesus in such a way that they are persuaded that it is to their best advantage.

 3.1.17 An Elder must not be a new convert.

a) “A bishop then must be … not a novice, lest being lifted up in pride he falls into the condemnation of the devil” (I Timothy 3:6). He should not be a neophyte, a new convert whose stability in the faith has not yet been tried and proven.

b) An Elder in the local church must have a good reputation in the community in which he lives, lest he becomes an object of ridicule. “Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (I Timothy 3:7). He must be given adequate opportunity to establish his solid testimony among those outside the local church so that when he becomes a leader within the church, there will be acceptance, not only from the people within the church, but also from without, thus the church being elevated in the eyes of those who are following its witness from without.

 3.1.18 An Elder must be capable of being God’s steward.

a) “For a bishop must … as the steward of God…” (Titus 1:7).

b) No Elder who has the responsibility for dealing with money should have a criminal record associated with financial indiscretion.

c) The Elders over finance should be above reproach and unindictable. He should not be one who can be tempted by misappropriation of money and be consequently prosecuted. His management of money must be as unto to God. He must be a steward of God, realize it, and act accordingly.

 3.1.19 An Elder must not be arrogant.

**a)** “For a bishop must be … not self-willed…” (Titus 1:7).

b) A person who seeks to have his own way, regardless of the opinions and feelings of others, should not to be an Elder.

 3.1.20 An Elder must not be soon angry.

a) “For a bishop must be … not soon angry” (Titus 1:7).

b) A Elder should not be one who gets angered easily, for the wrong reason, at the wrong time, and in the wrong measure.

c) His anger should be limited to affronts brought to the cause of Christ and not to them personally. To be angry when the person and teaching of Christ are trampled upon is a virtue.

d) An Elder should be a person who is not angered unless there is an unselfish reason to be angry.

 3.1.21 An Elder must be benevolent.

a) “For a bishop must be … a lover of good men” (Titus 1:8).

b) An Elder should be one who loves not only to be among people who are benevolent, but who loves benevolence and does it.

c) A selfish person should not be entrusted with the function of an Elder.

 3.1.22 An Elder must be just.

 a) “For a bishop must be …Just” (Titus 1:8).

b) An Elder is one who is even-handed and views the rights of others as if they were his own.

c) He is just and equitable, impartial in his judgments and decisions in the position or leadership that he has.

3.1.23 An Elder must be holy and unpolluted by the world.

 a) An Elder must be holy …” (Titus 1:8).

b) An Elder is one who recognizes that there are laws instituted by God that one must reverence and apply in his relationship with others.

c) Heis a person who recognizes and discharges his duties as prescribed by God in the moral realm, even as God prescribed ceremonial duties.

d) An Elder should recognize God’s moral commandments, not only pertaining to man’s relationship with God, but also his relationship with his fellow humans, and that these commandments must be the basis of the function of his daily life.

 3.1.24 An Elder must have self-control.

 a) “For a bishop must be …temperate” (Titus 1:8).

b) An Elder is a person who is a master of his passions and who is content in doing and having only what God wants him to do and to have.

3.1.25 An Elder must be a protector of sound teaching and a rebuker of false teachers.

a) “For a bishop must be holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).

b) An Elder adheres to and puts forth apostolic teaching that causes him to be strong and able to exhort as he teaches sound doctrine without deviation.

c) A second duty for the Elders is toward those who oppose the word of God, in contradiction to that which is apostolic teaching. These contradictors may be inside the local church or outside, and they should both be exposed.

d) Among the Elders teaching, there should be coincidence of doctrine and in the teaching of such doctrine. There should be no teaching that is not clearly stated and clearly understood.

**ARTICLE XI**

**MINUTES AND FISCAL YEAR**

Section I: The Minutes of the Church shall be kept in an active file which shall include the Minutes of the preceding five (5) years. After five (5) years, the Minutes shall be placed in a permanent file.

Section II: The fiscal year of the Church shall be the calendar year, beginning January 1st and ending December 31st.

**ARTICLE XII**

**WAIVER OF NOTICE**

Section: I: Unless otherwise required by law, whenever any notice is required to be given to any Elder of the church under the provisions of these Bylaws, under the provisions of the articles of incorporation, or under the provisions of the Texas Non-profit Corporation Act, a waiver thereof in writing, signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice.

**ARTICLE XII**

**INDEMNIFICATION**

Section I: The Church shall indemnify the Senior Pastor, Elders, Deacons, and members of Advisory Councils, officers, or other officials of the Church for expenses and costs (including reasonable attorneys’ fees) actually and necessarily incurred in connection with any claim asserted against any such person, by action in court, or otherwise by reason of said person’s being or having been the Senior Pastor, Elder, Deacon, or member of the Church, except in relation to matters as to which said person shall have been adjudged guilty of gross negligence or intentional misconduct with respect to the matter in which indemnity is sought, provided, however, the indemnification provided for in this section shall be subject to any applicable statutory restrictions.

Section II: The Church, by resolution of the Elders adopted by a majority of its members, may, under comparable terms and limitations, indemnify employees and agents of the Church with respect to activities within the scope of their services as officers, or other officials of the Church.

**ARTICLE XIV**

**RECORDS**

Section I: Maintenance of Records

 1.1 The Church or the duly appointed officer through action of the Elders or through proper delegation to one or more members of the church shall keep accurate and complete financial, administrative, and other records.

 1.2 This includes minutes of the proceedings of Church meetings and the names and addresses of the members of the Church.

 1.3 All records shall be maintained at the principal office of the Church, as prescribed in Article I and Article XII of these Bylaws.

Section II: Inspection of Records

 2.1 At the discretion of the Elders, such written records shall be open for inspection by the members of the Church, upon request, at such reasonable times and places as determined by the Elders.

**ARTICLE XV**

**DISSOLUTION OF THE CORPORATION**

Section I: This Corporation may be dissolved under the terms and provisions of the Non-Profit Corporation Act of the State of Texas, under the charter of the corporation and under the appropriate provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as it now exists or as it may hereinafter be amended.

**ARTICLE XVI**

**PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

Section I: The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised,* shall govern the Church in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with the Bylaws and any special rules of order the Church may adopt.

**ARTICLE XVII**

**AMENDMENTS**

Section I: Amendments

 1.1 These Bylaws may be amended or revised upon recommendation by an the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Elders present at a meeting of the Elders, provided a quorum is present.

 1.2 After such recommendation of an amendment or revision by the Elders, a simple majority vote of the members at a congregational meeting is required. If the majority vote of the members present is not received, no amendment or revision shall be made to the Bylaws.

 1.3 A copy of such proposed amendments or revisions should be distributed to the membership at least one (1) week prior to the meeting date.

Section II: Review of the Bylaws

 2.1 The Elders shall review the Bylaws of this Church at least every three years for updates, revisions, and ratification of changes.

**ARTICLE XVIII**

**REPEAL**

Section I: These Bylaws of the Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock shall repeal, supersede, and make void all former or similar documents adopted by the Sweet Home Baptist Church of Round Rock.