

FIRST BAPTIST
Rockport



Organization & Ministry Manual

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Table of Contents

Part 1: The Polity of First Baptist Rockport	1
Part 2: Organization of FBC Rockport	1
Part 3: Business Meetings (First Family Meetings).....	2
Part 4: Church Council.....	2
Part 5: Committees.....	4
Types of Committees	5
Ad hoc Committee	5
Search Committee	5
Special Committees	5
Standing Committees	5
Policies for Standing Committees.....	5
Standing Committees:	7
Building Committee.....	7
Finance Committee	8
Grounds Committee	9
Personnel Committee	11
Vehicle Committee	11
Part 6: Ministries and Ministry Teams.....	13
Worship Ministries.....	13
Connect Ministries	15
Grow Ministries	16
Serve Ministries	17
Reach Ministries	18
The Serve Team	19
Beyond These Walls Ministry Team (BTWMT).....	20
List of Revisions	23

First Baptist Church Rockport Organization and Ministry Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide an overview of and guidelines for how FBC Rockport organizes to accomplish its mission of leading all people to be shaped by the love of Jesus Christ.

Part 1: The Polity of First Baptist Rockport

FBC Rockport is a Baptist church, and therefore the polity (the organization and/or governmental structure) of FBC Rockport is *congregational*. Baptist churches were birthed out of the “free church” tradition and sought to follow the teachings of the New Testament. Accordingly, Baptist churches were made up of baptized believers who operated through democratic processes under the direction and leadership of pastors/elders. These pastors are called by both God and the congregation to serve in this office.

In a congregational church polity, the congregation governs itself under the lordship of Jesus Christ and with the leadership of the Holy Spirit with no superior or governing bodies and with every member having a voice in its affairs and its decisions. Final human authority rests with the congregation when it gathers for decision-making. Every member of the congregation has equal rights and responsibilities, and decisions are to be made by the gathered congregation except when such decisions have been delegated by the congregation to individual members or groups of members.

The organization of FBC Rockport, including all committees, officers, and ministries, is to manifest the lordship of Jesus Christ. As we organize, operate, and accomplish our mission, we submit to the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit and the Bible. The structure of our ministries, the nature and function of our officers, and the relationships of our members both within and without the fellowship are considered expressions of Christ’s governance over and among his people.

Part 2: Organization of FBC Rockport

FBC Rockport will organize itself to accomplish legal, practical, and ministerial functions related to the church. Some groups and offices within the church exist to accomplish legal or institutional functions (i.e., committees, trustees, etc.), and, while necessary, do not accomplish the mission of the church. Other groups and offices within the church exist primarily to accomplish the mission of the church and do not, necessarily, have any legal or institutional standing (i.e., Life Groups, ministry teams, Deacons, etc.). There are also those groups and offices that exist with both a legal/institutional purpose and a ministry/missional purpose (i.e., Pastor/Moderator, Quarterly Business Meeting/First Family Meeting, Church Council, etc.).

FBC Rockport will generally accomplish both its institutional and missional functions through quarterly business meetings (First Family Meetings), the Church Council, committees, and ministry teams under the direction of the ministerial staff or designated church members.

Part 3: Business Meetings (First Family Meetings)

FBC Rockport has quarterly business meetings, called First Family meetings. These meetings follow an agenda and decisions are made by the congregation by following the parliamentary rules of procedure described in *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*. Quorum consists of those members who attend the meeting, provided it has been properly called. The Senior Pastor, or someone the Senior Pastor designates, serves as Moderator of all business meetings.

Church members or committees having business for the church should contact the Pastor/Moderator well in advance of scheduled business meetings. The Senior Pastor may refer business to a responsible person, a ministry team, a committee, the Church Council, or place the matter on the agenda of scheduled business meeting or called business meeting.

Every voting member of the congregation, regardless of age, is entitled to address all questions submitted to the church in a business meeting, provided that the member is present or provision has been made for absentee ballots at a called business meeting.

Called business meetings are scheduled from time to time by the Senior Pastor or by written request of any church member. Members are notified of the date, time, place, and subject of these called business meetings at least three days in advance.

Part 4: Church Council

Purpose: The Church Council gives guidance, support, and assistance to the Ministerial Staff to coordinate the work of the church to accomplish its mission of leading all people to be shaped by the love of Christ. In addition, the Church Council will:

1. Enlist and nominate Church Officers and Trustees to the church for approval;
2. Assist the Ministerial Staff to enlist and nominate teachers and ministry leaders to the church for approval;
3. Enlist and nominate church members to fill vacancies to all standing and ad hoc church committees.

In all its meetings the Church Council represents the church and acts with the authority of the church on all matters except those needing to go before the church in a regularly or called business meeting. Those matters needing to go before the church in a business meeting would include, but not be limited to:

1. Approval of church members to serve on committees
2. Approval of church members to serve as teachers, church officers, ministry leaders, etc.
3. Buying or selling of property

4. Major renovation or development of existing church property.
5. Major changes to existing written policies and procedures.
6. Calling or dismissing ministerial staff members.
7. Approval of an annual budget or spending plan or increases to an existing budget or spending plan.
8. Conferring ordination on ministerial or deacon candidates.

Membership:

The Church Council will consist of a combination of church members chosen by their Life Groups who serve three year terms, church staff, committee chairpersons, and the Deacon Chairman. Each Adult Life Group may elect one representative who will serve on the Church Council. The Youth, Children, and Preschool Life Groups may select one representative from each of their areas.

All Life Group representatives, committee chairpersons, and the Deacon Chairman will serve as voting members of the Church Council.

All Ministerial Staff members, along with the Children's Ministry Director, the Church Secretary, and the Office Manager will serve as non-voting members of the Church Council.

A Church Council member will:

1. Be a member of FBC Rockport
2. Contribute to the work of FBC Rockport through time, talents, and/or offerings.
3. Commit to encourage, support, and assist the Ministerial Staff in leading the church to accomplish its mission
4. Communicate to the Church Council the concerns of the Life Groups and Ministry areas represented
5. Communicate the needs of the church to the Life Groups and Ministry areas represented
6. Attend scheduled meetings.

Meetings:

1. Quorum at Church Council meetings will consist of 50% of the voting members of the Church Council.
2. All votes taken by the Church Council require a super-majority (two-thirds) to pass.
3. Church Council meetings will be open to all church members unless stated otherwise.
4. The Senior Pastor will serve as the Chairperson of the Church Council and will plan and lead the meetings.

Meetings will generally consist of:

1. Minutes from past meetings
2. Financial Reports
3. Attendance Reports
4. Ministerial Staff Reports
5. Committee Reports
6. Old Business and New Business
7. Items for discussion
8. Prayer for the church and its mission

Church Council members serving three-year terms will begin those terms in January.

Church Council members who rotate off the Church Council will wait for a period of at least one year before serving another rotation on the Church Council or standing committee.

Part 5: Committees

A committee exists for the purpose of protecting and guiding the institution of the church. Committees serve corporate, “official business” functions on behalf of the church.

1. FBC’s committees do not necessarily accomplish the mission of the church, but keep the church operational so that it can accomplish the mission.
2. Committees have a set number of members selected by the Church Council and approved by the church who serve for a designated period of time.

General Guidelines

FBC Rockport shall have as many committees as it deems necessary.

1. The Church Council will be responsible for establishing and maintaining job descriptions of every standing committee.
2. All committee members shall be members of FBC Rockport
3. The committee shall elect its own officers.
4. Members of one family cannot serve on the same committee at the same time.
5. Committee members rotating off their committee will wait for a period of at least one year before serving another rotation on the Church Council or another standing committee.

The job descriptions of the current standing committees can be found at the end of this document.

TYPES OF COMMITTEES

AD HOC COMMITTEE

1. The Ad hoc Committee is formed to deal with a particular issue and is disbanded after the issue is resolved.
2. This committee can be made up of leaders of organizations involved with the issue or by church members at large.
3. Following a church vote to create an ad hoc committee, the Moderator shall appoint the members.

SEARCH COMMITTEE

Information on search committees to fill Ministerial Staff vacancies can be found in the Personnel Manual and the church by-laws.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

1. The congregation shall elect special committees at a previously announced day and time (i.e., Sunday morning worship services).
2. Shall consist of members elected by a written ballot without nomination.
3. Shall consist of an odd number of people, and the number of those serving will be determined by the congregation at the time the committee is installed.
4. The committee is elected for a period of time.

STANDING COMMITTEES

1. Members shall be recommended by the Church Council and elected by the congregation.
2. Members shall serve on a three year rotating basis with one-third to be elected each year.
3. Members rotating off of a committee that have served for an incomplete period of time or are completing another committee member's term cannot serve until the one year limitation has passed.
4. Committee members will rotate in January.

POLICIES FOR STANDING COMMITTEES

Committee Chairman

1. The Church Office sends reminders of monthly meetings to committee chairmen.
2. Chairmen notify members of their committees of the meeting.

3. If a committee does not meet, the chairman or his her designated representative, must notify the members.
4. Committee notebooks are in the church office and returned following the meeting.
5. Committee chairmen, or a committee member, presents recommendations from the committee for church approval at Church Council, and at Business Meetings if necessary.
6. Committee chairmen should include all members of their committee in decisions and projects.

Committee Orientation

1. Orientation, conducted by the Executive Pastor, is held the second Tuesday in January.
2. Chairman should contact new committee members to let them know when and where their committee meets. A new list of committees will be made available prior to Orientation.

Quorum

1. A quorum is not needed to vote at a regularly scheduled meeting. Three members must be present to vote.
2. At a called meeting a quorum of 75% needs to be present to vote (5 of the 6).
3. Quorum could also be achieved through good faith efforts to include all committee members in votes or decisions made apart from face to face meetings (i.e. phone calls, emails, etc.).

Committee Recommendations

Any recommendation to be made to another committee should be put in writing.

Miscellaneous

1. Committees rotate in January.
2. The Church Council sends a letter to those that do not attend meetings on a regular basis, reminding them of their importance on the committee. If the person chooses to resign, they are requested to send a letter to the Church Council.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

BUILDING COMMITTEE

Purpose:

The Building Committee is responsible for working with the church staff to ensure the upkeep, safety, and functionality of all church buildings. Members of this committee work collaboratively to maintain a welcoming and safe environment for all church members and visitors.

Membership:

This committee shall be a six-member rotating committee and will serve three years with two members replaced each year. No person shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive years until the expiration of one year from the completion of his last term. The members of this committee shall elect a chairperson, vice-chair, and secretary. The chairperson shall serve as a member of the Church Council.

Duties:

1. Routine Maintenance
 - a. Conduct regular inspections of church buildings to identify maintenance needs.
 - b. Perform or coordinate minor repairs and upkeep tasks such as painting, plumbing, carpentry, and electrical work.
2. Preventive Maintenance:
 - a. Develop and implement a preventive maintenance schedule to prolong the life of the church's infrastructure and equipment.
 - b. Ensure regular servicing of heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and other essential systems.
3. Project Management:
 - a. Plan and oversee larger repair and renovation projects, including coordinating with contractors and vendors.
 - b. Ensure that all projects are completed on time, within budget, and to the highest standards of quality and safety.
4. Safety and Compliance:
 - a. Ensure that all buildings and grounds comply with local building codes, health and safety regulations, and insurance requirements.
 - b. Conduct regular safety drills and inspections and maintain records of compliance.
5. Budgeting and Financial Oversight:

- a. Assist in developing and managing the building maintenance budget.
 - b. Track expenses and report on financial status to the church administration and finance committee.
6. Volunteer Coordination:
- a. Recruit, train, and coordinate volunteers for maintenance tasks and projects.
 - b. Organize workdays and special projects that involve the broader congregation.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Membership:

This committee shall be composed of church members who are good stewards of their possessions. They should have the confidence of their fellow church members and possess good business judgment. Members should not be immediately related to any congregational minister or employee.

This committee shall be a six-member rotating committee nominated by the Church Council and will serve three-year terms with two members replaced each year. No person shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive years until the expiration of one year from the completion of his last term. The members of this committee shall elect a chairperson, vice chair, and secretary. The chairperson shall serve as a member of the Church Council. The members shall be elected prior to January 1 each year.

Purpose:

To develop and recommend to the Church Council an information plan for sharing financial information throughout the year; and to administer the gifts of the congregation using sound principles of financial management

Duties:

1. Budget Planning:
 - a. Study records of giving and potential giving of congregation.
 - b. Analyze current budget strengths and weaknesses.
 - c. Evaluate budget requests. If changes are considered, the request should be returned to the original requester for resolution of differences. Without resolution, Church Council will be consulted.
 - d. Direct annual budget preparation.
 - e. Present the church budget to the Church Council for review.
 - f. Present the budget to the congregation for adoption.
2. Budget Administration:

- a. Approve budget expenditures
 - b. Review expenditures periodically in terms of budget allocations
 - c. Review the Church Council requests for special offerings
 - d. Request an audit of the congregation's financial records if needed
 - e. Recommend an adequate financial system to the Church Council
3. Insurance:
- a. Work with the Executive Pastor to review the church property and casualty insurance program and provide for the church's needs.
 - b. To make certain that prior to budget time, any changes or increases in coverage, limits, deductibility, costs and term involved are considered. This should be kept available in the financial secretary's office for review.
4. Scholarship:
- a. Administer the First Baptist Church of Rockport, Texas Scholarship Funds, i.e. the Charles Barnett Scholarship Fund and the Angela Hise Scholarship Fund.
 - b. Develop and submit scholarship selection guidelines and criteria for approval by the Church.
 - c. Prepare all documentation associated with the solicitation, selection, and award of scholarships. This documentation shall be prepared in accordance with Church approved guidelines and criteria.
 - d. Solicit, evaluate applications, select and award scholarships to worthy students.
5. Stewardship:
- a. Develop and recommend to the Church Council an overall plan for promoting and communicating stewardship needs to the church.
 - b. Provide information on the Cooperative Program to appropriate congregational leaders.
 - c. Provide information on Christian wills and trusts to appropriate congregational leaders.
 - d. Provide IRA Tax Free gift information.

GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Purpose:

The Grounds Committee is responsible for the upkeep, beautification, and overall maintenance of the church's outdoor spaces. Members of this committee work together with the church staff to create and maintain an inviting and safe environment for all parishioners and visitors. The Grounds Committee shall make annual budget recommendation to the Finance Committee.

Membership:

This committee shall be a six-member rotating committee and will serve three years with two members rotating off each year. No person shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive years until the expiration of one year from the completion of his last term on this committee. The members of this committee shall elect a chairperson, vice chair, and secretary. The chairperson shall serve as a member of the Church Council.

Duties:

1. Grounds Maintenance:
 - a. Conduct regular inspections of church grounds to identify maintenance needs.
 - b. Perform or coordinate tasks such as mowing, trimming, planting, weeding, watering, and general landscaping.
2. Seasonal Upkeep:
 - a. Implement seasonal maintenance tasks such as hurricane preparation, tree-trimming, and seasonal planting.
 - b. Ensure that pathways, parking areas, and outdoor gathering spaces are safe and well-maintained year-round.
3. Beautification Projects:
 - a. Plan and execute beautification projects to enhance the aesthetic appeal of church grounds.
 - b. Organize and participate in gardening projects, including planting flowers, shrubs, and trees.
4. Equipment and Supplies Management:
 - a. Maintain an inventory of gardening tools, equipment, and supplies.
 - b. Ensure that all equipment is properly maintained and stored.
5. Safety and Compliance:
 - a. Ensure that all grounds maintenance activities comply with local safety and environmental regulations.
 - b. Conduct regular safety checks of playgrounds and outdoor facilities.
6. Volunteer Coordination:

- a. Recruit, train, and coordinate volunteers for ground maintenance tasks and projects.
- b. Organize workdays and special projects that involve the broader congregation.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Purpose:

The Personnel Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Senior Pastor and it is to make recommendations to the Church in matters related to the employed personnel. This includes such area as employment, salaries, benefits, personnel services, and other staff needs operating in the framework of Christian understanding and devotion. The Committee should be proactive in recognizing the need for additional staff members and make recommendations when appropriate. It is necessary to rely on the Senior Pastor and other staff leaders in recognizing the needs that exist; therefore, constant communication must be maintained between these staff members and the personnel committee. The Personnel Committee will also have responsibility for maintaining the church's Manual of Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Membership:

This committee shall be a six member rotating committee nominated by the Church Council and will serve three years with two members replaced each year. No person shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive years until the expiration of one year from the completion of his last term. The members of this committee shall elect a chairperson and the chairperson shall serve as a member of the Church Council.

Duties:

1. **Employment:** Responsibilities include filling needed staff positions by the procedures spelled out in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.
2. **Salaries:** The Personnel Committee is responsible for initiating and maintaining the congregationally approved salary program for all employees. The Personnel Committee is responsible for recommending annual adjustments in the congregationally approved salary program.
3. **Employment Benefits:** The Personnel Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving medical and life insurance, retirement plan, vacation, holidays, etc. for all employees and ministers.
4. **Employee Job Descriptions:** The Personnel Committee is responsible for initiating and maintaining congregationally approved principle functions and responsibilities of each employee and minister.

VEHICLE COMMITTEE

Purpose:

The Vehicle Committee is responsible for the maintenance, safety, and efficient operation of all church-owned vehicles. Members of this committee work collaboratively with the church staff to ensure that the church's transportation needs are met reliably and safely. This committee shall make budget recommendations to the Finance Committee.

Membership:

This committee shall be a three-member rotating committee and will serve three years with one member being replaced each year. No person shall be eligible to serve more than three consecutive years until the expiration of one year from the completion of his last term. The members of this committee shall elect a chairperson who will serve as a member of the Church Council.

Duties:

1. Routine Maintenance:
 - a. Conduct regular inspections and basic maintenance of church vehicles, including checking fluid levels, tire pressure, and battery health.
 - b. Ensure vehicles are clean, both inside and out.
2. Repairs and Servicing:
 - a. Coordinate with the church staff the necessary repairs and scheduled servicing.
 - b. Maintain detailed records of all maintenance and repair activities.
3. Safety and Compliance:
 - a. Ensure all church vehicles meet local safety regulations and standards.
 - b. Conduct regular safety checks and ensure all necessary safety equipment is present in the vehicles (e.g., first aid kits, fire extinguishers).
4. Scheduling and Coordination:
 - a. Manage the scheduling and availability of church vehicles for various church activities and events.
 - b. Coordinate with church staff and volunteers to ensure transportation needs are met efficiently.
5. Budgeting and Financial Oversight:
 - a. Assist in developing and managing the vehicle maintenance budget.
 - b. Track expenses related to vehicle maintenance, repairs, and fuel, and report on financial status to the church administration and finance committee.
6. Documentation and Record Keeping:

- a. Make sure that all vehicles have up to date registrations, inspections, and insurance and provide any documentation to the church office.
- b. Develop and implement Driver Training Policies and a Driver Training Program.

Part 6: Ministries and Ministry Teams

The mission of FBC Rockport is to lead all people to be shaped by the love of Christ.

At FBC Rockport we believe a disciple is someone who is shaped by the love of Christ...

We strive to align our ministry efforts so that we accomplish our mission of leading all people to be shaped by the love of Christ. Ministry that accomplishes the mission of the church happens in both formal, planned organizations and events, as well as in informal, unplanned ways.

A *ministry team* is a group of disciples, bound together under the lordship of Christ, who are committed to the shared goal of meeting a particular need related to the overall mission of the church. People may join teams at any time, as they are led by the Spirit. Teams are led by the Ministerial Staff or by church members designated by the church.

Those interested in joining or forming a ministry team should contact the church office for more information.

WORSHIP MINISTRIES

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2

Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe God offers Himself in a personal relationship through the presence of the Holy Spirit. We respond to God's offer of relationship. Worship declares God's worth as we praise and glorify God. We believe God gathers His church so that we might worship Him. God ministers to His people as they worship. His people respond to His presence among them. God's people minister to one another as an act of worship.

There are many words to describe worship:

- *Mystery*: a supernatural experience as we encounter the Divine Other who is Spirit and Truth
- *Celebration*: we recount and rejoice in God's revelation of Himself to us in Christ
- *Life*: all we do is to declare God's worth and glory

- *Dialogue:* God takes the initiative to reveal Himself and His ways; we respond back
- *Transformation:* one result of worship is the transformation of God's people, through God's word and God's Spirit, into the likeness of Jesus Christ.
- *Giving:* we offer ourselves and all we have for all that He is

We affirm our Baptist heritage as being part of the free church tradition. We do not practice liturgies, rituals or creeds. We recognize that each Baptist church has the freedom to conduct its worship under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Our worship will highlight the primacy of the proclamation of God's word and calling people to respond. Ordinances such as baptism and the Lord's Supper will be observed as the church sees fit and will be important parts of corporate worship.

As God shapes us through our worship of Him, the key question for us is **“Was God honored by my worship? Was God pleased with my heart and offering?”**

At FBC Rockport:

- We are committed to providing corporate worship that has an audience of one.
- We are committed to providing opportunities for our members to use their various talents to lead in corporate worship: singing, playing instruments, drama, reading, preaching, testimonies, etc.
- We embrace the meaning and/or purpose of worship rather than specific forms of worship, and therefore routinely incorporate new ideas or methods in worship.
- We respect the different ways in which people learn and engage with God. We are committed to providing times of corporate worship that reflect the congregation's unique culture while also challenging our members to be open to different worship experiences change as our congregation changes.
- We will provide materials for church members to use in times of private worship and family worship.
- We believe that worship is the motivation for all our other ministry areas. All we do is to reveal, honor, and glorify God.
- We view stewardship, or giving, as a part of both personal and corporate worship and encourage our members to worship God through tithes and offerings.
- We seek to equip our members to recognize and respond to the presence of God both individually and corporately.
- We expect our members to be transformed or shaped by the love of Christ as a result of individual and corporate worship.

Those involved in the worship ministries sing in the choir, play or sing in the praise band, help operate the church's audio/visual equipment, participate in dramas, read scripture or pray during worship services, and more.

CONNECT MINISTRIES

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **Ephesians 4:1-6***

The Holy Spirit unites believers together and forms them into the body of Christ, the people of God, and the family of God. This is a supernatural, spiritual reality. Because of the unity of the Spirit, and because Christ died to create his church, scripture takes for granted that believers will live in relationship with one another and experience the blessings of spiritual fellowship and oneness, or *koinonia*. To be Christian is to be in fellowship and in community with other believers. One cannot be in Christ and be isolated from the church.

To connect with the church, one first has an encounter with Jesus Christ in which that person trusts in Christ as Savior and invites him to be Lord of all. Secondly, a person connects with the church by publicly professing faith in Christ through baptism as a believer, by making a statement that he or she has done so in a previous church, or by transferring membership from another Baptist church. A Christian's connection to the church is a spiritual reality through the bond of the Spirit. The Spirit unites Christians together in the church, overcoming all social, racial, economic, political, and generational differences. God Himself adds people to the church as He sees fit.

The bond of the Spirit is characterized by love. The perfect love of Christ, our model for loving one another, is both a protector and a provider. Our relationships in the church should protect one another from the loneliness and estrangement so common in our world and protect from the pain and stain of sin and its consequences. Our relationships in the church should nurture, support, and encourage one another in our walk with Christ and the people of God through the ebb and flow of life.

As God shapes us by connecting us to the church, the key question is, **“Am I living in an authentic, committed relationship not only with Christ but also with the other members of FBC, the local, physical expression of the body of Christ to which I belong?”**

At FBC Rockport:

- We believe church membership is meaningful and beneficial for both individuals and for the corporate church.
- We expect our members to be baptized believers in Jesus Christ.
- We expect our members to actively participate in corporate worship and Life Groups.

- We will provide a variety of ways for members to engage with other members in Life Groups and other ministries where they can be cared for, encouraged, and held accountable in love.
- We will provide clear pathways for church membership.
- We expect our members to avoid gossip, slander, and divisive attitudes and behavior within the church.
- We expect our members to contribute to the functioning of the church through participation in the work of committees and scheduled business meetings when able.

Those involved in the connect ministries teach or work in their Life Groups, help plan church-wide fellowships, help provide meals for bereaved families, help decorate the church seasonally and on special occasions, and provide pastoral care for church members in a variety of ways and settings.

GROW MINISTRIES

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

*Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. **Ephesians 4:11-16***

Like children enrolling in school, followers of Christ engage in a continuous process of moving toward spiritual maturity and Christ-likeness. This process of growth begins at the point of salvation and ends when we meet Jesus face to face in Heaven. Until then, Jesus calls us to be his disciples. The principle New Testament term relative to discipleship is the verb “to follow,” meaning to walk the same road as another. This means discipleship is an intensely personal relationship between the disciple and the Master. To be a disciple of Jesus means to be under the continual instruction of Jesus as teacher and Lord in the attitude of learning and applying the revealed will of the Master Teacher. Through the work of the Spirit, God uses His word to produce fruit in our lives to make us more like Christ. Growth, therefore, is the result of God’s activity from beginning to end. Our growth is to produce fruit that glorifies God. Our role in growth is to die to ourselves and live by faith in Christ. Disciples live under the yoke of Christ (Matthew 11:28-30), continue in Christ (John 15:1-8), bear fruit for Christ (John 15:8), submit to church discipline (Acts 2), and submit to divine discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11).

As God shapes us through growth, the key question is, **“Am I growing in Christ-likeness as I live the life of a disciple of Christ?”**

At FBC Rockport:

- We will provide opportunities for our members to be involved in open discipleship groups (i.e., Life Group) and closed discipleship groups (i.e., a short-term study).
- We make resources available for personal and family discipleship opportunities.
- We encourage church members to take responsibility for their own spiritual growth.
- We encourage parents and guardians to take responsibility for the religious education of their children.
- We provide a variety of ongoing training and growth opportunities for our members.
- We have a high regard for the word of God.
- We desire to equip and encourage our members to practice spiritual disciplines.
- We place a high value on moving from knowledge to obedience and make this an emphasis of our teaching ministries.
- We will offer opportunities for believers of all ages to participate in a new believer class.
- We place a high value on training our ministry leaders to carry out their ministry responsibilities.

Those participating in the grow ministries teach discipleship classes for adults, youth, and children, teach missions education classes to children, lead in preteen ministry, volunteer and work in Vacation Bible School, volunteer as sponsors at youth and children's camps, volunteer as childcare workers during worship services.

SERVE MINISTRIES

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” Matthew 25:34-40

There are numerous New Testament passages making clear that God expects His people to minister to the needs of others. The model is Jesus Christ, the perfect example of self-giving, sacrificial love (Matthew 20:25-28, John 13:15). Jesus came to serve and not be served. Jesus serves the world today in and through the church, the body of Christ. The ministry to which Christ calls us takes many forms, but it is distinctive because it is done in Christ's name and for His glory, not out of purely humanitarian motives.

Serving involves practical acts of helping other Christians who are in need, helping our sister churches to better embody the presence of Christ in their unique contexts, and seeking to meet the needs of people in our community, across Texas, throughout North America, and around the world. We will encourage our members to use their God-given time, talents, and treasure to serve in the name of Christ. While it is true that God uses our Christian service to shape us to be more like Christ, the immediate benefit of our service, as individuals and as a church, will be to someone else.

As God shapes us through serving, the key question is, **“Am I living out the servant example of Jesus Christ so that I and others can be shaped by His love?”**

At FBC Rockport:

- We believe God is at work in the world accomplishing His purposes.
- We believe God has called us to join Him in accomplishing His purposes for his glory.
- We believe God has given to us and *will* give to us everything we need to be obedient to our calling.
- We are committed to serving the members of FBC Rockport as God leads.
- We are committed to taking missions outside of our church and into the world as God leads.
- We are an historic Southern Baptist congregation, and we are committed to maintaining our ties to our sister churches in Aransas County, the Blanco Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and the Southern Baptist Convention.
- We are also committed to partnering with these Baptist entities to accomplish God’s purposes in the world.
- We are committed to being strategic and focused in accomplishing our mission and to be good stewards of resources and people.

Those who participate in the serve ministries are involved both within and without the church. Within the church they serve on committees and in Life Groups, volunteer time and talents to maintain the church property, help meet the physical needs of church members, serve as Deacons, serve on the church’s Safety Team, serve as Ushers and Greeters, and more.

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN SERVE MINISTRIES GENERALLY IN TWO WAYS. FIRST, THERE ARE LOCAL MISSION PROJECTS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE BEYOND THE WALLS MINISTRY TEAM. SECONDLY, MISSION PROJECTS IN TEXAS, NORTH AMERICA, AND ACROSS THE WORLD ARE COORDINATED BY THE SERVE TEAM.

REACH MINISTRIES

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

All of God’s people are responsible for proclaiming the gospel and bearing witness to the saving power of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 24:46-48, John 20:21). God expects His church to have an outward, missionizing, evangelistic thrust to break down barriers that separate persons from God, from society, and from one another. The power for proclamation and witness comes from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Reaching people involves both a lifestyle of relationship evangelism, and the spoken word which calls for a response. Evangelism is done in the power and authority of Jesus Christ for the purpose of making disciples.

As God shapes us through reaching people, the key question is, **“Am I reaching out to unbelievers through my words and actions each day, inviting them to know Christ?”**

At FBC Rockport:

- We emphasize member involvement with unchurched and/or underchurched people.
- We encourage our members to see themselves as missionaries.
- We equip and encourage our members to introduce friends and family members to faith in Christ.
- We equip our members to interpret contemporary culture through the lens of the Bible.
- We prioritize praying for the lost in our community and for mission efforts around the world.
- We hope to be a transforming presence in our community.
- We seek to be intentional in identifying, praying for, and reaching unbelievers in our community.

The Beyond These Walls Ministry Team leads our church members to share their faith and to get involved in outreach and service projects in Aransas County. The Serve Team leads our church members to be involved in evangelism and service through state, national, and international mission projects.

THE SERVE TEAM

Purpose: The Serve Team will lead the church to fulfill the church’s mission of leading all people to be shaped by the love of Christ by evaluating, planning, and implementing the church’s strategy for Associational, state, national, and international missions and evangelism.

Leadership: The Serve Team will be led by the designated ministerial staff member or by the person designated by the Church Council. The leader of the Serve Team will serve as part of the Church Council. Currently, Monty Brecheen leads the Serve Team.

Membership: Anyone interested in missions and the specific mission projects coordinated by the Serve Team is welcome to be on the Serve Team, including non-members. The Serve Team will need to organize itself to accomplish all the responsibilities entrusted by the church.

Responsibilities:

1. Prayerfully plan, implement, and evaluate mission trips and projects in the Blanco Baptist Association, Texas, North America, and across the world.
2. Prayerfully plan and promote mission offerings and each one's regional emphasis: Annie Armstrong Offering for North American Missions (North American Mission Board) in April, Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions (Texas Baptists) in September, Lottie Moon Offering for International Missions (International Mission Board) in December. There is also the Texas Baptist Hunger Offering collected around Mother's Day.
3. Submit budget requests for the church's mission efforts, including mission trips, The Blanco Baptist Association, and missionary support.
4. Be responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating special mission projects, such as Operation Christmas Child, Disaster Relief ministry through Texas Baptist Men and Samaritan's Purse, etc.
5. Recruit church members to serve in mission projects and trips.
6. Communicate God's work to the church on a regular basis.
7. Submit a written report monthly to the Church Council, and quarterly to the Church through the First Family Magazine.
8. Lead the church to pray for, encourage and support missionaries sent by FBC Rockport on either short-term or long-term missions.

Examples of mission trips and projects planned, implemented, and coordinated by the Serve Team:

- Mission projects to or coordinated with sister churches in the Blanco Baptist Association: South Texas Children's Home, Vacation Bible School help, etc.
- Mission projects to or coordinated with sister churches in the Baptist General Convention of Texas and their partner organizations: South Texas Children's Home, River Ministries, Texas Baptist Men, etc.
- Mission projects to or coordinated with sister churches and ministries in the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist World Alliance, and their partner organizations: North American Mission Board, International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, etc.
- Mission project to or coordinated with partner organizations of FBC Rockport: Operation Christmas Child, Samaritan's Purse, 61 Isaiah, Stepping Forward Ministries, etc.

BEYOND THESE WALLS MINISTRY TEAM (BTWMT)

Purpose: The Beyond These Walls Ministry Team will lead the church to fulfill the church's mission of leading all people to be shaped by the love of Christ by evaluating, planning, and

implementing the church's strategy for local missions and evangelism in Rockport and Aransas County.

Leadership: The Beyond These Walls Ministry Team will be led by the designated ministerial staff member or by the person designated by the Church Council. The leader of the BTWMT will serve as part of the Church Council.

Membership: Anyone interested in local missions and evangelism and the specific mission projects coordinated by the BTWMT is welcome to serve, including non-members. The BTWMT will need to organize itself to accomplish all the responsibilities entrusted by the church.

Responsibilities:

1. Prayerfully plan, implement, and evaluate the church's mission/service projects in Rockport and Aransas County.
2. Prayerfully plan, implement, and evaluate the church's evangelism training, prayer emphases, and efforts in Rockport and Aransas County.
3. Submit budget requests for the church's local service projects and evangelistic trains and efforts.
4. Recruit church members to serve in local service projects and evangelistic efforts.
5. Communicate God's work to the church on a regular basis.
6. Submit a written report monthly to the Church Council, and quarterly to the Church through the First Family Magazine.

Examples of service projects and evangelistic efforts planned, implemented, and coordinated by the BTWMT:

- Community Table
- Good Samaritan's Center
- Children's Coalition and Care Portal
- Habitat for Humanity of Aransas County
- Backpacks and Blue Jeans
- RFISD Employee luncheon and outreach
- Ministry to First Responders
- Jail ministry
- 3 Circles Training and Emphasis

List of Revisions

February 21, 2020, Additions to Finance Committee section to add the scholarship fund names and “Provide IRA Tax Free gift information.

August 31, 2023, Revisions to the last paragraph of the “Serve Ministries and “Reach Ministries” sections to include reference to Beyond These Walls Ministry Team

August 31, 2023, Addition of “The Serve Team” and “Beyond These Walls Ministry Team” sections

August 23, 2024, Addition of Building Committee, Grounds Committee, and Vehicle Committee and an Index.