

Periodically, MSBC documents must be updated to reflect the changes in church structure, operating procedures, and to bring them in line with congregational desires. The MSBC Deacon Body (the Deacons) have undertaken to update their operating procedures. A new Deacon Handbook (DHB) is available and attached for congregational review. This DHB will be presented at the next business meeting for congregational approval.

To facilitate the reading of the DHB, the following definitions are used throughout the document. In addition, an outline of the DHB is provided below.

Definitions

- MSBC – Main Street Baptist Church
- Congregation – body of enrolled and non-enrolled attendees.
- The Church – the congregational enrolled members
- DHB – Deacon Handbook
- The Deacons (upper case) – MSBC deacon body
- deacon (lower case) – signifies a single deacon

DHB Outline

- Introduction
- Deacon Selection
- Deacon Qualifications and Ordination
- Deacon Responsibilities and Roles
- Deacon-of-Month Responsibilities
- Deacon Officers
- Deacon Code of Conduct and Accountability
- Exceptions To Deacon Service
- Discipline and Termination of Deacon Service

MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

DEACON HANDBOOK

Main Street Baptist Church (MSBC) is a congregationally led body of believers. All decisions not delegated by the congregation's enrolled members (the Church) to a particular group or committee shall be made by a majority of the Church in either a regular or called business meeting. The MSBC deacon-body (Deacons) consists of members who have been elected by the Church to be servants to MSBC in accordance with admonitions and guidelines found in the New Testament as interpreted by the Church. An ordained deacon actively serves MSBC for a lifetime, until the execution of an Exception (refer to discussion on Exceptions below), is terminated (refer to below), leaves the service of MSBC, or dies.

DEACON HANDBOOK

Acceptance of this Deacon Handbook (DHB) requires a majority approval by the Church at a business meeting. The Church will be given two (2) weeks to review the DHB or any changes thereto, prior to a business meeting vote. Minor changes to the DHB that have been approved by the Church (such as the total number of serving deacons) do not require the Church to reapprove the entire DHB.

DEACON SELECTION

- I. The Church has authorized that the number of active deacons shall not exceed fifteen (15). Any increase or decrease to this number, as requested by the Deacons and based on the needs of MSBC, shall be approved by a majority vote of the Church.
- II. The Deacons shall consist of active and inactive members. Active members are those deacons actively attending meetings (either in person or via remote communication) and are active in church attendance and ministry. Inactive members will consist of deacons requesting an Exception (refer to the definition of an Exception below). Only active deacon members are allowed to vote on deacon business. Inactive members may attend deacon meetings, contribute to deacon discussions, and deacon meeting agenda items but will not be allowed to vote.
- III. Selection and approval of new deacons
 - a. When the need arises for additional active deacons the Deacons, along with the Pastor, will identify a list of potential candidates. Potential candidates will be reviewed and prioritized by the Deacons/Pastor and a nominee list will be developed. These nominees will be forwarded to the Deacon selected Screening Committee.
 - b. The Committee will select from the nominee list the number of future deacons necessary to fill the existing open position(s) and provide them with a copy of the Deacon Handbook.
 - c. The Committee will then screen the future deacon(s) to determine if they are qualified to serve and have a desire to serve. Based on the results of the screening, the Committee will present the Deacons with a positive result or request an additional name(s) from the nominee list.

- d. Once the Committee has the desired number of qualified nominee(s), the Deacons will present them to the Church for their approval.
- e. Following the Church approval the Committee will provide each new deacon with a copy of *The Baptist Deacon* by Robert E. Naylor prior to the ordination ceremony.

DEACON QUALIFICATION AND ORDINATION

- I. Deacon nominees shall be trusted Christians, spiritually mature, servant (spiritual) leaders, involved in the Church ministries, and living in accordance with 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Deacons may be male or female.
- II. Nominees shall be actively engaged in a defined ministry within MSBC that can be articulated as the nominee's "Calling".
- III. The candidate for deacon will have studied *The Baptist Deacon* by Robert E. Naylor and agree with the principles set forth in the text prior to ordination.
- IV. An ordination ceremony of the newly approved deacons will be performed as soon as physically possible.
(Individuals joining MSBC and actively serving the congregation for six (6) months who have been previously ordained at another Southern Baptist Church and completed the steps identified in Section III (Deacon Selection) will not have to participate in an ordination ceremony and will be considered active after Church approval.)
- V. MSBC deacons are ordained with the explicit intent to serve God and MSBC, making disciples through the application of each deacon's unique gifts and talents.

DEACON RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES

- I. Deacons recognize that they are not all "equally" gifted but freely offer their specific gifts to MSBC by serving in various positions which will be beneficial to the mission of MSBC.
- II. Deacons are first and foremost to be servants of MSBC and will be a resource for committees, teams, and staff as requested.
- III. Deacons are spiritual overseers of the Church, working in conjunction with the Pastor and ministry staff to monitor the spiritual wellness of the Church. At the request of the Pastor, the Deacons will provide leadership in instances where actions are needed to protect the spiritual wholeness of the Church, such as church discipline.
- IV. Deacons serve as advocates and protectors of the Pastor, ministry staff, committees, and ministry teams. Individual active deacons may, and are expected to, serve on leadership and other related committees if asked to serve by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Church.
- V. To promote peace and harmony in MSBC, a deacon shall be a true servant as outlined in the scriptures seeking senior pastor guidance in fulfilling their call.
- VI. In addition to the responsibilities and roles identified above, the Deacons will work to meet

various needs as identified by the congregation, the Pastor, and by our local community. One of the ways this is accomplished is through the Benevolence Offering.

- VII. Deacons shall be aware of the necessity of freeing the Pastor and Ministers from duties which would otherwise diminish their effectiveness. Any shift in duties from Pastors/Ministers to the Deacons will be made with the mutual consent of all parties involved.
- VIII. Deacons shall make themselves available to the MSBC leadership to serve in whatever positions they are called upon to serve.
- IX. Deacons serve the Lord's Supper.
- X. Deacons take responsibility for collecting all MSBC offerings in worship services and shall secure all funds. Funds must be secured by at least two (2) active deacons, one of which must be the Deacon of the Month (DOM).
- XI. Serving the Lord's Supper and collecting the offerings every Sunday are primarily the responsibility of the Deacons. Active deacons should be used in the execution of these tasks if enough active deacons are present. If there are not sufficient active deacons present to execute the assigned tasks, individual church members in good standing may serve as substitutes on a temporary basis. Care should be taken to make sure that selecting substitutes does not become a habit. The assigned DOM must verify that no active deacon is available at the time of execution. Substitutes cannot secure the Church funds.
- XII. There are instances where special groups within the Church (such as the Youth Group) may request serving as the Church offering collectors on a temporary basis. These requests must be approved by the Deacons and the Pastor. The DOM will be responsible for the leadership and execution of the offering and only the DOM can secure the collected funds.
- XIII. Deacons are responsible for coordinating the Benevolence Offering and other MSBC special offerings.
- XIV. Individual deacons assist in worship services as DOM on a monthly rotating basis.

DEACON OF THE MONTH RESPONSIBILITIES

- I. Organize ushers to collect MSBC offerings during the worship services and ensure the offering is secured in the deposit box.
- II. Organize deacons for the Lord's Supper.
- III. Organize and assist with the procurement, setup, and cleanup of the Lord's Supper elements.
- IV. Organize the collection of Benevolence and any other special offerings.
- V. Ensure that the Sunday morning worship service attendance count is completed and documented on the designated attendance sheet.
- VI. Assist with seating and greeting needs of visitors and late arrivals.
- VII. Resolve any lighting or environmental control (A/C or Heat) issues that occur during, before, or after services.
- VIII. Be available to staff during MSBC worship services.

- IX. Collect new member card(s) and deliver them to the office.
- X. Prepare baptistry for baptismal services and organize cleaning of the baptistry after each baptism service.
- XI. Notify the next DOM upon the last Sunday of each month.

DEACON OFFICERS

The Deacon officers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary) are nominated by a committee of three (3) active deacons and confirmed by a simple majority vote by the Deacons.

All officers serve a two-year term based on the will of the Deacons. Said term may be extended by agreement of the Deacons and the out-going officer. The term can be terminated at any time by a seventy percent (70%) vote of the Deacons or at the request of the serving officer. A special election will be held by the Deacons to fill the vacant position(s).

At the end of the officers' terms a new Secretary will be elected. The outgoing Vice-Chairman and the Secretary will move up to the next position (the past Vice-Chairman now takes over as Chairman and the past Secretary assumes the Vice-Chairman duties). If the Vice-Chairman or Secretary no longer wishes to serve, then an election will be held to fill that position.

CHAIRMAN

- I. The Chairman serves as ex-officio member of the Church Leadership Committee (CLC).
Note: The term 'ex-officio' is a standard committee position with the exception that the ex-officio member cannot be counted to form a quorum (Robert's Rules of Order).
- II. The Pastor, Chairman of Deacons, or the CLC can call for a business meeting.
- III. The Chairman serves as moderator of all Deacon meetings.
- IV. The Chairman prepares the agenda for each Deacon meeting and distributes the agenda prior to the meeting.
- V. The Chairman notifies all Deacons and Staff of any meetings, regular or called.
- VI. The Chairman is responsible for overseeing Deacon compliance with the MSBC DHB.

VICE-CHAIRMAN

- I. The Vice-Chairman serves as ex-officio member of the Personnel Committee.
- II. The Vice-Chairman shall be available to assume the duties and obligations of the Chairman or Secretary when these officers are unavailable for any required meeting.
- III. The Vice-Chairman will maintain a directory of MSBC widows and widowers (1 Timothy 5:9-10) to delegate and oversee deacon care.

SECRETARY

- I. The Secretary serves as ex-officio member of the Finance Committee.
- II. The Secretary records the minutes of each deacon meeting (monthly & called) and distributes them to the Deacons, Pastor, Church Ministers, and the Church secretary for office records filing.
- III. The Secretary maintains personal copies of meeting minutes during his/her term of service.
- IV. The Secretary maintains, updates, and distributes the yearly DOM list and the list of active Deacons.
- V. The Secretary has available at each Deacon meeting the following items:
 - minutes of the last meeting,
 - copies of the Church Constitution and By-Laws,
 - list of current active deacons, and
 - list of current DOM assignments.
- VI. The Secretary provides notification to the Deacons of the Lord's Supper services.

DEACON CODE OF CONDUCT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- I. When a person is selected to serve as a deacon, that person commits to actively promoting the Fellowship and shall put the welfare of the Church ahead of personal interest.
- II. A deacon accepts the guidelines and admonitions concerning deacons as found in the New Testament and interpreted by the Church.
- III. A deacon shall not appropriate authority to themselves, which is contrary to the New Testament teaching and/or contrary to the wishes of the Church.
- IV. A deacon shall not promote, in any fashion, a division in the life of the Church.
- V. A deacon shall support MSBC Pastors, Ministers, Committees, and Teams and be committed to decisions made by the Church, even if that deacon is not individually in support of the decision at the time, in accordance with Philippians 1: 27.
- VI. A deacon shall always attempt to offer an effective witness, provide strong leadership, promote church harmony, and be aware of any matter affecting the general and spiritual welfare of the Church.
- VII. A deacon will attend all scheduled and called meetings by the Chairman of the Deacons. If a deacon is unavailable for a called or scheduled meeting, he/she must notify one of the Deacon Officers at least one (1) day prior to the meeting.

EXCEPTIONS TO DEACON SERVICE

Once ordained and added to active service, MSBC Deacons may seek to be placed on an exception-to-compliance (Exception) with the DHB (e.g., worship attendance, deacon meeting attendance, active ministry service).

To qualify for an Exception, the deacon must provide the Deacon Secretary with a letter or email stating:

- I. purpose of the requested Exception,
- II. date the Exception will commence, and
- III. date (if known) the Exception will conclude and the deacon will resume compliance with the duties of a deacon as defined by the DHB.

The Chairman of the Deacons will present the letter to the Deacons in the next scheduled Deacon Meeting, and the Deacons will approve or disapprove the requested Exception by majority vote.

There may be times when a deacon is on the Active Deacon List but is Inactive (as defined by this DHB). During such circumstances, a Deacon Officer may request that such a deacon be issued an Exception. A seventy percent (70%) vote of the Deacons is required to execute this Exception.

Once the Exception is approved, the deacon will be placed on the Inactive Deacon List. During the Exception period, even though a deacon will not be expected to perform the duties of a deacon, he or she will continue to be bound by all other aspects of the DHB (i.e., prohibition from promoting divisiveness within the Church, etc.).

DISCIPLINE AND TERMINATION OF DEACON SERVICE

Deacons are subject to Church discipline in accordance with Matthew 18, Galatians 6: 1-2, 2 Timothy 2: 24-25, 1 Timothy 5:21, Ephesians 4:15, 2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, and 2 Thessalonians.

Breach of the Code of Conduct by a deacon shall subject the deacon to appropriate discipline by the Deacons on an individual case basis and may include disciplinary measures, as approved by seventy percent (70%) of the active Deacons, up to and including termination. Termination shall result when an individual deacon:

- I. transfers membership to another Church,
- II. is found to be inactive (not attending physically or by remote communication) in church attendance for a period of six (6) months, or
- III. is found by a majority of the Deacons to be out of compliance with the standards of The Baptist Deacon by Robert E. Naylor, and/or the DHB.

Once a deacon has been terminated, the Chairman of the Deacons will notify the Church at the next

scheduled Business Meeting.

In accordance with the guidelines discussed above and as agreed to by signing below, the MSBC deacon hereby agrees to accept the Deacon Duties, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct as delineated herein.

SIGNATURE OF AGREEMENT

I, _____, agree to comply with the terms herein or forfeit my capacity as an
(print name) MSBC Deacon.

Signature

Date

NOTE: This document, when approved by a Deacon majority and accepted by the membership of MSBC, supersedes and replaces all, and every other document of record, concerning the Deacons, with the exception of the MSBC Constitution and By-laws and Governance Structure Document.