

## **ROYAL PALM BAPTIST ASSOCIATION C O N S T I T U T I O N**

### **ARTICLE I -- NAME**

The name of this organization shall be Royal Palm Baptist Association, Inc., also known as the Royal Palm Association of Churches, SBC (RP).

### **ARTICLE II -- PURPOSE**

This association of autonomous Southern Baptist member churches exists to increase the effectiveness of member churches in fulfilling the Great Commission as described in Matthew 28:18-20, to share with and mutually benefit from a local caring fellowship of churches, and to develop synergistic cooperative ministries with each other and other Southern Baptist churches, associations, conventions, agencies and boards. This includes promoting the cause of missions generally and specifically, assisting in the establishment of churches, Sunday Schools, missions, community ministry centers, and other institutions and agencies for education, evangelism, benevolence and charity; and it shall seek to advance the cause of Christ in all of its cooperating churches in the community.

### **ARTICLE III -- MEMBERSHIP**

The ROYAL PALM BAPTIST ASSOCIATION consists of cooperating member churches that are identified in the official membership directory published annually and housed at the RP office.

Churches that share our common Baptist doctrines, desire to participate in the local fellowship with sister churches, commit to the financial support of the Great Commission mission of the association, and wish to be a part of the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention may seek membership in this association.

Cooperating member churches shall be entitled to representation by a maximum of five messengers. Procedures for withdrawal and removal of member churches are specified in the Bylaws.

### **ARTICLES IV – EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

The Executive Director/AMS (Associational Mission Strategist), as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Corporation, together with the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and the Treasurer serve as the Executive Officers of the association who are authorized to sign and execute all legal documents approved by the messengers at a Voting Assembly or Annual and Semi-annual Meeting on behalf of the association.

### **ARTICLE V – AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION**

The amendments to this constitution must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of a minimum quorum of ten (10) churches (with their messengers) with “Full Cooperation” status in attendance an Annual Meeting.

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## **ROYAL PALM BAPTIST ASSOCIATION B Y L A W S**

### **BYLAW I – NAME**

The name of this association shall be the ROYAL PALM BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, also known as ROYAL PALM ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES, SBC (RP).

### **BYLAW II – PURPOSE**

This association of autonomous Southern Baptist member churches exists to increase the effectiveness of member churches in fulfilling the Great Commission as described in Matthew 28:18-20. The association provides a medium through which autonomous member Baptist churches in cooperation with the Florida Baptist Convention, Southern Baptist Convention, and their agencies and institutions to:

- a. Promote fellowship and cooperation among the member Southern Baptist churches in fulfilling the Great Commission.
- b. Promote the cause of missions generally and specifically, assist in the establishment of churches, Sunday Schools, missions, schools, community ministry centers, camps, assemblies, hospitals, and such other institutions and agencies for education, evangelism, benevolence and charity; and it shall seek to advance the cause of Christ in all of its cooperating churches and missions in the community.
- c. Promote and encourage partnership in the ministries, programs, and work fostered by the Royal Palm Baptist Association, the Florida Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention, particularly in the fields of evangelism, church planting, church growth, religious education, church and community ministries, chaplaincy, state, national, and international missions.
- d. We have a commitment to teaching and modeling Biblical doctrines, and a desire to cooperate with other Southern Baptist churches in the fulfillment of the Great Commission, the commitment to participate financially and personally with the Association is the basis of fellowship and cooperation.

### **BYLAW III – DOCTRINES**

We believe the Bible is the final authority for determining doctrine. Our Statement of Faith, referred to as *The Baptist Faith and Message of the Southern Baptist Convention of 2000*, is the primary guide used by the association in doctrinal matters.

We believe that God ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man and a woman, and therefore, RP will only recognize marriages between one biological man and one biological woman. This Statement on Marriage and Sexuality specifically gives RP the right and authority to restrict the use of its facilities and property to uses consistent with the Bible, with its Statement of Faith and Statement on Marriage and Sexuality, as solely determined by RP.

Further, the Executive Director/AMS (Associational Mission Strategist) and staff of RP shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman, and the facilities and property of RP shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.

RP's property and facilities may be used only for purposes consistent with the association's doctrinal beliefs as reflected in the Bible and the association's Statement of Faith, including its Statement on Marriage and Sexuality. Use of property and facilities will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with RP's

religious teachings as reflected in the Bible and the association's Statement of Faith, including its Statement on Marriage and Sexuality. RP's Executive Director/AMS and officers of the corporation shall be the final decision-making authority regarding whether any proposed facility/property use is in conformity to the association's doctrinal beliefs.

The association has the authority to refuse messengers from churches that are not in "Full Cooperation" (see Bylaw IV. Section 2), or in accord with the doctrine, principles, policies, and practices of the association.

## **BYLAW IV – MEMBERSHIP**

**SECTION 1. COMPOSITION.** The association is composed of Southern Baptist churches that want to be more effective in fulfilling the Great Commission as described in Matthew 28:18-20; sharing with and benefiting from a local caring fellowship of churches; and developing synergistic cooperative ministries with each other and other Southern Baptist associations, conventions, agencies and boards. Member churches demonstrate their commitment to the ministry of the association by their participation and financial contributions.

**SECTION 2. COOPERATION.** Each church participates in the administrative and decision-making process of the association through messengers. Each member church with "Full Cooperation" status shall be entitled to five (5) messengers. Pastors and other ministerial staff are automatically received as messengers, as are our elected associational Administrative Lead Team and officers. Laypersons may be selected to serve as messengers. Each year these messengers should be listed on the "Annual Messenger Verification Form" and submitted at least 30 days prior to an Annual or Semi-Annual meeting, and/or a Voting Assembly for the calendar year.

### **CHURCHES WITH "FULL COOPERATION" STATUS:**

- a. Autonomous members of the SBC, and/or Florida Baptist Convention & Royal Palm Baptist Association.
- b. "Closely identify" (as per SBC Constitution) with the Baptist Faith & Message 2000
- c. File their Oct. Annual Church Profile (ACP) online with the Florida Baptist Convention  
*(The FBC looks for this to validate your annual 501(c)3 FBC group tax exemption status & letter)*
- d. Give regularly to Royal Palm and SBC Cooperative Program (via Florida Baptist Convention)
- e. Participate in various gatherings of Royal Palm (and not under "Watch Care" status).

**SECTION 3. APPLICATION.** Association membership is attained by submitting a completed membership application and supporting documents to the association.

### **MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS**

- a. Obtain the two-page application in preliminary consultation with the Executive Director/AMS.
- b. Complete each section, affirm they closely identify with the Baptist Faith & Message, and affirm their intentions to begin practicing the "Full Cooperation" items listed above in Section 2.
- c. Attach all requested documents (Articles of Incorporation; Constitution & Bylaws).
- d. Schedule a meeting with the AMS and Membership Team reps to return the application.
- e. Understand your church will be under "Watch Care" status for at least one year, during which time we will assist you in obtaining your Florida Baptist ID # & your SBC ID #.
- f. Schedule a meeting to request being voted into full membership at an Annual Meeting.

- g. Attend an Annual or Semi-Annual meeting to be presented and voted on by the association, following your statement of doctrinal alignment and support of our SBC mission.

The Membership Team is responsible for assisting the church in preparing this application, and to present their recommendations at an Annual or Semi-Annual Meeting. The church shall furnish evidence of its adherence to Biblical doctrine; its commitment to financial and voluntary support of the Association; its intention to participate in Southern Baptist cooperative missions and its desire to be in fellowship with the churches of the association.

Prior to becoming a new member, a church will be considered under Watch Care for at least one year and may apply for full membership at any time during that year.

**SECTION 4. AUTONOMY.** The association has no power or control regarding the decisions and actions of their member churches or churches under Watch Care. We fully respect the scripturally taught autonomy of the local member churches. This association exists to encourage, support, and offer consultation in such things as strategic planning and crisis intervention. Should internal or inter-church conflicts arise, these churches shall be encouraged to make every possible effort to resolve the conflict through diligent prayer and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The Executive Director/AMS, and/or other associational leadership under his direction, may offer to assist or respond to a request for assistance from the church through its pastors/elders/overseers, deacon representative, or another church leader. The Executive Director/AMS, and/or those under his direction may moderate or participate in meetings with the appropriate parties involved to assist in resolving the difficulties and seeking reconciliation in the Spirit of Christ.

**SECTION 5. REMOVAL OF MEMBERSHIP.** The association is authorized to refuse seats to messengers from any church that is found to be misaligned in faith or practice as described in this document.

While Southern Baptist churches need not adopt any particular statement of faith, any church that intentionally operates in any manner that does not closely identify with the Biblical doctrines and Christian principles expressed in *The Baptist Faith and Message of the Southern Baptist Convention of 2000*, is in jeopardy of suspension or termination of membership in the association.

The association, through the Annual or Semi-Annual Meetings or a Voting Assembly is authorized through its Executive Director/AMS, appropriate officers and teams, to take reconciliatory actions, to suspend membership, and/or to remove association membership from churches not in compliance with the basis for fellowship and cooperation.

Any remedial actions will be preceded by accurate gathering of information, interviews with the church leadership, and an honest attempt to reconcile the church.

Any membership removal action shall require a 30 day notification, two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present and voting in a regular or special meeting of the Voting Assembly, and two-thirds (2/3) vote, and a minimum of ten (10) churches with "Full Cooperation" status at the next Annual Meeting or Semi-Annual Meeting of the association. All membership privileges are to be suspended immediately following the Voting Assembly action.

This provision shall not be used to require uniformity in worship styles, conformity to a specific creed, or to advance a particular position that is merely political or cultural.

Any church that fails to submit the information requested in the Annual Church Profile; does not financially support the RP and the Cooperative Program; and/or fails to be represented at the Annual Meeting may be asked to confirm their desire for continued fellowship and membership in the association.

Should the association vote to remove a local member church, this act will be reported to the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention for them to consider the removal of the church from their rolls as well.

**SECTION 6. WITHDRAWAL.** Any church wishing to voluntarily withdraw its membership from the association should submit a written notification to our association office. This act will be reported to the Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention for them to consider the removal of the church from their rolls as well.

## **BYLAW V – ASSOCIATIONAL GATHERINGS**

### **SECTION 1. ANNUAL MEETINGS.**

The association shall schedule an Annual and Semi-Annual Meeting each year, at such time and place as it may select. The dates of these two meetings shall be placed on the calendar giving five months' notice to these meetings. If it should be necessary or desirable to change the time or place, the Administrative Lead Team is authorized to make the changes. Motions may be submitted in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting to allow for collaboration between the writer and Administrative Lead Team in creating the best possible presentation of the motion for most likely affirmation at the annual meetings.

### **SECTION 2. VOTING ASSEMBLY**

A Voting Assembly meeting is a meeting where the messengers of the churches meet other than the Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings. The association staff and officers may schedule meetings of a Voting Assembly as needed. The Voting Assembly assists in the overall administration of the work of the association with guidance as may be given by the Constitution and the Bylaws. Any messenger may introduce business at any meeting. The messenger may make a motion at the time of the meeting and give a written copy of the motion to the Executive Director/AMS and Moderator. Or the messenger may submit a motion in advance of the meeting. Written previous notice of any pending motion requiring Voting Assembly action may be given in its entirety at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting to allow for collaboration between the writer and Administrative Lead Team in creating the best possible motion. If the Voting Assembly determines that an emergency exists which requires action, then new business may be acted upon at the time it is introduced.

### **SECTION 3. MESSENGERS**

- a. Messengers:** Pastors and other ministerial staff are automatically received as messengers of the Annual Meeting(s) and Voting Assembly. Churches are encouraged to annually select at least one layperson to serve as a messenger. No church shall have more than five (5) Voting Assembly messengers, including any automatic messengers, and shall submit an "Annual Messenger Verification Form" at least 30 days prior to Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings or Voting Assemblies. RP officers and Administrative Lead team members shall be viewed as automatic messengers (included in the five (5) per church limit) to the Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings and any Voting Assembly.
- b. Method of selection:** Messengers elected by member churches shall be received at our Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings or at any Voting Assembly for the calendar year.
- c. Term of Office:** Pastors and ministerial staff shall continue as messengers as long as they remain in their position with the church. Lay persons should be elected annually.

## **SECTION 4. QUORUM**

Ten (10) member churches with “Full Cooperation” status (Bylaw IV. Section 2.) shall constitute a quorum at all Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings and Voting Assembly meetings.

## **SECTION 5: SPECIAL CALLED MEETINGS**

In the event of extremely important or emergency situations, the Executive Director/AMS and Moderator in consultation with the Administrative Lead Team may call a special meeting of the Voting Assembly. Ten (10) days prior notice of the meeting shall be given to all member churches.

## **BYLAW VI – OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 1. General Information**

The elected officers of the association shall also serve as the officers of the corporation, as referred to in the Constitution.

**a. Method of Selection:** The officers of the association are recommended by the Nominating Team and elected by the association. The method of selecting the Executive Director/AMS is described in Article VIII. All officers shall come from member churches exhibiting “Full Cooperation” (See Bylaw IV. Section 2).

**b. Term of Office:** Officers shall have terms of two (2) years. All officers except the Moderator and Vice -Moderator may succeed themselves.

**c. Accountability:** Officers are accountable to the association and the Voting Assembly and are to provide at least one report for the Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings. They are expected to be active and ready to report at all Voting Assembly meetings.

**d. Duties:** Specific duties of officers shall be drawn from the general duties expressed in this document in consultation with the Executive Director/AMS and Administrative Lead Team to allow for real time flexibility in our rapidly changing times.

### **SECTION 2. Moderator**

**Main Function:** To plan and conduct the business sessions of the Annual and Semi-Annual Meetings and Voting Assembly in consultation with the Executive Director/AMS and his staff.

### **SECTION 3. Vice Moderator**

**Main Function:** To assist the Moderator in the performance of his duties as called upon and to perform the duties of the Moderator when he is unavailable.

The Vice-Moderator becomes Moderator in the event of a Moderator vacancy, and a replacement Vice-Moderator shall be recommended by the Nominating Team and presented at the next Annual, Semi-Annual meeting, or Voting Assembly.

### **SECTION 4. Clerk**

**Main Function:** To be responsible for the accurate recording, filing and preservation of all important activities and transactions of the association and to make this information available upon request to member churches. This officer may be the Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director/AMS.

### **SECTION 5. Treasurer**

**Main Function:** To be responsible for overseeing the appropriate receiving, accounting, and disbursing of all associational funds in coordination with the Finance and Stewardship Team, the Executive Director/AMS, staff, and Administrative Lead Team.

## **SECTION 6. Executive Director/AMS**

**Main Function:** To serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the association, overseeing office operations, supervising staff and ministries, and serving as an ex-officio member of all teams and organizations, except the Administrative Lead Team where he serves as the team leader. He represents the association in denominational, religious, civic, and social events.

## **SECTION 7. Additional Officers**

Additional officers may be added and voted upon by the association as needed for the effective operation of the association at the recommendation of the Executive Director/AMS, staff, Administrative Lead Team, and Nominating Team.

# **BYLAW VII – MINISTRY TEAMS**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**a. Method of Selection:** The Nominating Team nominates potential members of all teams, except itself, for election by the Association. Nominating team members are appointed by the Administrative Lead Team (see section 1 below). All team members shall come from member churches exhibiting “Full Cooperation,” (see Bylaw IV. Section 2.) with a goal of no more than one person serving from any one church to allow for greater representation.

**b. Membership:** Teams shall have no less than three (3) members, and, when advisable, may be increased at the discretion of the team leaders in consultation with the Executive Director/AMS, staff, and Administrative Lead Team.

**c. Term of office:** Members of teams shall serve two (2) year terms, with a goal of one-third (1/3) of the members' terms expiring each year. In special circumstances, re-election of a team member to an immediate additional term may be allowed when approved by the association at the time of election.

**d. Frequency of meetings:** Teams shall meet as needed to fulfill their responsibilities, at least once per calendar year.

**e. Team Leaders:** Teams shall have at least a team leader and a recording secretary. The team leader may be recommended by the Nominating Team with the Executive Director/AMS as per item f. that follows.

**f. Administration:** Teams shall work in cooperation with the Executive Director/AMS. Written minutes of all team meetings shall be recorded and filed with the Executive Director/AMS.

**g. Duties:** Detailed duties of these teams shall be drawn from the general duties expressed in this document in consultation with the Executive Director/AMS and Administrative Lead Team to allow for real time flexibility.

## **SECTION 1. Administrative Lead Team**

**a. Main Function:** To ensure the overall effectiveness of the association regarding the Annual and Semi-Annual Meeting(s) and Voting Assemblies, ministry teams, events, property issues, revisions to the legal documents (as officers/trustees as per our Articles of Incorporation), submitted motions and all issues related to the Constitution, Bylaws and the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual.

**b. Membership:** The Administrative Lead Team members are the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Executive Director/AMS, and Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director/AMS, as well as the Team Leaders of the Finance and Stewardship Team, Personnel Team, Church Planting/Revitalization Team, Membership Team, and Nominating Team. The Executive Director/AMS shall serve as the team leader of the Administrative Lead Team.

## **SECTION 2. Membership Team**

**Main Function:** To accept and review applications from churches who wish to become members of the Association, in consultation with the Executive Director/AMS, staff, and Administrative Lead Team.

## **SECTION 3. Finance and Stewardship Team**

**Main Function:** To work with the Executive Director/AMS, staff, and Administrative Lead Team to secure, administer, and report the Association's finances, promote giving to the Association, and lead in the preparation of the annual budget.

## **SECTION 4. Personnel Team**

**Main Function:** To work with the Executive Director/AMS, staff, and Administrative Lead Team regarding all matters relating to paid staff in accordance with the Personnel Policy & Procedures Manual which includes the search, selection, recommendation and dismissal of an Executive Director/AMS and any additional staff.

## **SECTION 5. Nominating Team**

**Main Function:** To work with the Executive Director/AMS, staff, and Administrative Lead Team to nominate elected officers and team members for approval by the Association.

## **SECTION 6. Church Planting/Revitalization Team**

**Main Function:** To work with the Executive Director/AMS, staff, and Administrative Lead Team in planning, promoting, and coordinating mission projects and church planting in the Association.

## **SECTION 7. Additional Ministry Teams**

Additional teams may be added and voted upon by the association as needed for the effective operation of the association at the recommendation of the Executive Director/AMS, staff, Administrative Lead Team, and Nominating Team.

## **BYLAW VIII – ASSOCIATIONAL STAFF**

The association shall employ an Executive Director/AMS, to function as the Chief Executive Officer. In the event of a vacancy in this position, the Personnel Team shall serve as a search team who shall prayerfully seek out, interview, and act with due diligence in recommending a qualified individual in the Lord to fill the position. This recommendation shall be presented at a Voting Assembly or an Annual or Semi-Annual Meeting for messenger approval. The association shall employ additional staff as it deems wise and appropriate. Ministerial, administrative, and support staff shall be employed in keeping with the association budget and supervised by the Executive Director/AMS. All staff shall abide by the provisions listed in the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual.

## **BYLAW IX – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

**SECTION 1.** The latest revised edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be the final parliamentary authority for all association voting gatherings as needed.

**SECTION 2.** The association, when gathered, may adopt temporary special rules, if desired, not in conflict with these Bylaws and/or the Constitution or generally accepted parliamentary procedure, and in keeping with Christian values and principles.

## **BYLAW X – FORMAL DOCUMENTS AND AMENDMENTS**

### **SECTION 1. ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**

The purpose of the Articles of Incorporation is to serve as a legal document for the State of Florida. Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the minimum quorum of ten (10) churches (with their messengers) with “Full Cooperation” status in attendance at an Annual Meeting.

### **SECTION 2. CONSTITUTION**

The Constitution is the foundational document of the association. It determines the purpose and membership of the organization. As such, it is the most authoritative document for the association’s organization. Amendments to the Constitution will require two-thirds (2/3) vote the minimum quorum of ten (10) churches (with their messengers) with “Full Cooperation” status in attendance at an Annual Meeting.

### **SECTION 3. BYLAWS**

The Bylaws indicate how the association will operate as an organization. The Bylaws give further details and specify matters not mentioned in the Constitution. Amendments to the Bylaws will require two-thirds (2/3) vote the minimum quorum of ten (10) churches (with their messengers) with “Full Cooperation” status in attendance at an Annual Meeting.

### **SECTION 4. PERSONNEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

The Administrative Lead Team will maintain a Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual to ensure effective compliance with the provisions listed in the Constitution and Bylaws. The manual’s approval and amendments require a majority vote of the Administrative Lead Team, however in some cases approval by the Voting Assembly may be sought by the Administrative Lead Team or the Executive Director/AMS.

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**These documents were approved by the Messengers at the October 7, 2025, Annual Meeting**