

Name Change FAQ

This was originally published as a blog in 2017. It has been updated with new info.

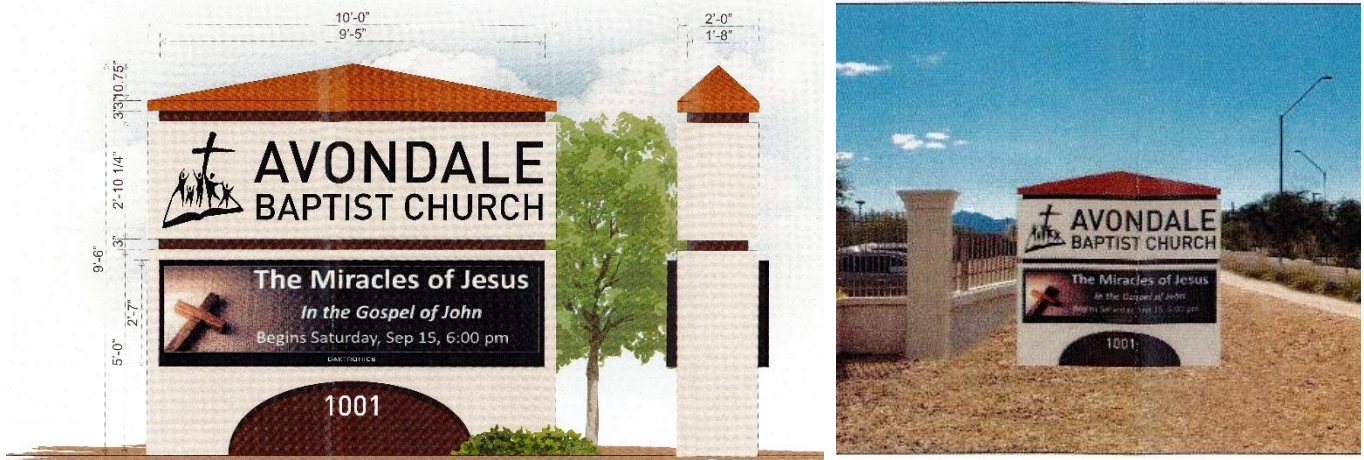
Several weeks ago, I shared on a Sunday morning that we are considering a name change. Nothing has yet been decided, but we want to answer some of the many questions we have received. *Why are we considering changing our name? What else would change? How does a church change its name? Does a name change really matter?* Here are honest answers to your questions:

- *Why would we consider changing our name?* The word “Southern” has changed connotation over the years. To a growing percentage of people, it communicates racism, or it says that we are a “white church.” That is not who we are. We are becoming, and we want to be a multi-ethnic church. Secondly, our name First Southern Baptist Church of Avondale is long and unwieldy. A shorter name, without the word “Southern” would help gain name recognition.
- *Do you really think it would help?* Yes. Many members have told me of their experiences while inviting others to our church. When they get to the word “Southern” they can sense and even see a change in attitude. This has happened to me numerous times, but I’m not the only one.
- *Would we still be affiliated with the SBC?* Yes. We do not plan to change affiliation. The truth is that most SBC churches don’t have the “Southern” in their name and the Southern Baptist Convention recently approved an alternative convention name: Great Commission Baptists.
- *What else would change?* Changing our name doesn’t change our doctrine, our practices, or who we are. Names matter, especially in communicating who we are, but it doesn’t change *us*.
- *It seems like we’ve made a lot of changes. Why?* The world has changed tremendously in the 19 years I’ve served here. When I came, I communicated primarily via land-based phone lines, first-class mail, and bulk-mailed newsletters. Now, I use a cell phone, email, webpages, texting, apps, social media, and videos. (I didn’t even have a cell phone until I came—and my first one only made phone calls! We had only one worship service, and few community ministries. Truth doesn’t change, but other things must if we are to do God’s work more effectively and efficiently.
- *How do we change our name?* The church votes in a business meeting to change a name. It will be well-communicated to our members and is scheduled for January 20, 2019. Afterwards, we will change our corporation papers, signage, and literature.
- *Is this just your idea or do others agree with you?* The motion will come as a joint proposal of our deacons and our church council; both groups are in agreement that we change our name.
- *Isn’t it expensive?* There is some corporate paperwork that takes time but that costs little. Our signs will need to be changed, but they are dated and need to be updated anyway. And since we print up our own bulletins, and publish our own webpage, that cost is minimal.
- *What will our new name be?* We are recommending *Avondale Baptist Church*, a simple name that has been at the top of every survey we have done. Our new webpage would most likely be www.abcaz.net. (Our existing webpage would redirect to the new one automatically.)

Our desire is to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that a name change will help us do that. That is our only motivation!

Additional Information

The two most visible changes would be to our sign and webpage. Here is a first draft of a new sign on Central Avenue from the south and north. It includes a very visible digital display that can be easily updated. It would be paired with a similar monument sign (without the digital display) to be placed closer to the MAC on La Canada.



As you can see from the following screen shot, our webpage is already set so that those who go to fsbca.org or abcaz.net see the same webpage. We are currently considering ways to improve our webpage with more graphics and to make it more adaptable to those who wish to view it on portable devices. Here is a current look at www.abcaz.net.

