

# EL BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH

## CONSTITUTION

### A. Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties and responsibilities of each individual member of this church (“members”) and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

### B. Name

The name of this church shall be El Bethel Baptist Church (hereafter referred to as “El Bethel Baptist Church” or the “church”).

### C. Business Location

The address of the principal office of this church shall be 6611 N. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Tampa, Florida 33610.

### D. Purpose

#### **The Purpose of El Bethel Baptist Church:**

This purpose is based upon two very important scripture passages:

**The Great Commandment:** *Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:37-39*

**The Great Commission:** *Jesus came saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded your; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20*

In these two passages we find our purpose and the **Five Functions** of the church:

- To “Love God with all your heart” is “WORSHIP”
- To “Love your neighbor” is “MINISTRY”
- To “Go and make disciples” is “EVANGELISM”
- To “Baptize them” is joining in “FELLOWSHIP”
- To “Teach them” is “DISCIPLESHIP”

### **E. Church Covenant**

Having been led, as we believe by the spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and, on the profession of our faith; having been baptized in the name of our Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; we do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to hold the Holy Scriptures as our guide for faith, daily living, and church relationships; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to avoid any and all actions which would compromise or damage our witness and example to the lost, and to other Christians so that all that we do will be done to the glory of God; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **F. Articles of Faith**

We Believe:

- The Bible, the sixty-six books in the Old and New Testaments, is without error in its original writing (2 Tim. 3:16), its author was God (2 Pet. 1:19-21), being thereby verbally and plenary inspired (Matt. 5:18) and are our supreme and final authority in faith and life.
- There is one living and true God (Deut. 6:4; Psa. 90:2), who exists eternally in three Persons; the Father is God (1 Cor. 8:6), the Son is God (John 1:1, 14; 10:30; Heb. 1:8-10), and the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4).
- The Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man. He was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-28; Luke 1:26-38), lived a sinless life (2 Cor. 5:21), rose bodily from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20), and ascended to God the Father to rule as the KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS (Rom. 1:4; Rev. 19:16).
- The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Godhead, that His ministry is to convict the unsaved, to regenerate, baptize, indwell, seal, and control those who are saved (John 3:3-7; 14:16; 16:8-11; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 1:13).
- Man, although originally created without sin (Gen. 1:27, 31), by one transgression fell (Gen. 3:6, 7; Rom. 5:12, 19), so that all mankind are now sinners and justly under condemnation (Eph. 2:2; Rom. 3:9-18, 23). God has provided salvation through the finished work of Jesus Christ who died on the cross and shed His blood for the remission of sins (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:22). Salvation for sinners is by grace alone through faith alone and is available to all who genuinely call upon the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16, Rom. 10:13; Eph. 2:8). All believers are eternally secure (John 3:1, 2).

- The believer is sanctified positionally at the time of salvation by the completed work of Jesus Christ (John 19:30; 1 Cor. 1:2); sanctified progressively by the continuing work of Jesus Christ through the Spirit and the Word (Rom. 7:24 – 8:13; John 17:17), and will be completely sanctified only at the time of glorification (Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:1, 2).
- The Holy Spirit permanently indwells the believer at the time of conversion and places him into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).
- The blessed hope of the believer is the imminent, pre-millennial appearance of Christ to rapture the church, His bride (1 Thess. 4:13-18, 5:9; Rev. 6:17). The lost will face eternal punishment (John 5:28-29, Rev. 20:11 – 15) and the saved will enter into the eternal presence of the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17).
- That the believer is responsible to carry or send the Gospel to the uttermost part of the earth, by word of mouth, by financial support, and by effectual fervent prayer (Gen. 28:22; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Eph. 6:18-20; Phil. 1:5; 4:18-19).
- The Holy Spirit has gifted all Christians so that they might minister during the church age; that while the Spirit may give any gift at any time, He gives them in conformity to the Scriptures; that some gifts given, such as prophecy, apostleship, tongues, and miracles were foundational and temporary in nature (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:17, 11; 13:8; Eph. 2:20; 4:11-16; Heb. 2:3-4).
- The Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church; water baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the triune God. Baptism signifies and symbolizes Christian life begun. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death and signifies Christian life continued. These two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mat. 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; Rom. 6:4).

## **BY-LAWS**

### **ARTICLE I Membership**

#### **A. General**

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church (“members”) and the conditions of such membership.

#### **B. Candidacy**

Any person may be offered as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism.
2. By transfer of membership (or letter of recommendation) from another Baptist church.

The candidate shall be under the watch care of the church and the vote for membership shall not be final until such letter or recommendation is received.

3. By statement of prior conversion and baptism in another Baptist church when no letter is obtainable or forthcoming in a reasonable amount of time.

4. Any member coming to this church from another denomination must be baptized by immersion into the membership of this church unless the baptism of the candidate was by immersion and in harmony with the beliefs of the New Testament and El Bethel Baptist Church.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred privately to the pastor and the deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days.

Attendance in a church membership class shall be required for all candidates, as long as a new church member class is provided by the church. A copy of the church Covenant, Articles of Faith, and Bylaws shall be given to all candidates.

#### **C. Requirements of Members**

There shall be four qualifications for membership in the Church:

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation;

2. Baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation;
3. Completion of the Church's membership class; and
4. A commitment to abide by the Membership Covenant.

#### **D. Duties of Members**

Unless a church member is providentially limited, it shall be his or her duty to attend regular meetings; to contribute to the financial program of the church; to cultivate personal holiness and family devotion; to watch over and counsel one another in the spirit of brotherly love; to be exact in fulfilling their obligations and performing promised; and, as opportunity affords itself, to commend the gospel of Christ.

Unless a church member is providentially limited, it shall be his or her duty to be in good standing (as stated above) to act and vote on the transactions of the church.

Unless a church member is providentially limited, it shall be his or her duty, when removing from El Bethel Baptist Church, to unite as soon as possible with another church and request a letter of dismissal. Except for church members who are providentially limited, members of the church who fail to participate in or attend church services at El Bethel for a reasonable amount of time, may be dismissed from the church at the option of the church.

The Pastor and Deacons may place on the inactive membership list any member who absents himself from the services of this church for six consecutive months, only after faithful efforts have been made to bring such members to restoration.

Inactive members forfeit all voting rights as long as they remain on the active membership roll. Inactive members may be placed on the active membership roll upon recommendation by the Pastor and Deacons. Upon such placement, voting rights will be reestablished.

The Pastor and Deacons may remove from the membership of El Bethel Baptist Church any individual who is not providentially limited and whose name remains on the inactive list for a period of six months.

#### **E. Discipline of Members**

Should a member become an offense to the Church and its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of their covenant vows, or nonsupport of the Church, the Church may terminate their membership by a three-fourths vote of the quorum, but only after faithful efforts have been made to bring such members to repentance and reformation. Such recommendation will be presented to the Church during a Church business meeting.

Exclusion of a member follows a serious condition which threatens to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, that has had every reasonable effort made by the pastor and deacons to resolve according to Matthew 18:15-17, and has then been taken before the church. A meeting must be called for the purpose of exclusion and the members present at that meeting must reach a two-thirds majority vote for exclusion.

#### **F. Termination of Membership**

Membership shall be terminated as a result of: (1) Death; (2) Dismissal to another Baptist church; (3) Dismissal to another church other than Baptist; and (4) Exclusion by action of this church. Any person whose membership has been terminated may be restored to membership by a two-thirds majority vote by the church upon evidence of repentance and reformation.

### **ARTICLE II Church Officers**

#### **A. Pastor**

The pastor shall be the spiritual leader of this church pursuant to the New Testament teachings. Subject to the reserve power of the church, the pastor, with the church staff working directly under him, shall organize, supervise, direct, promote, develop, and enlarge the spiritual program of this church and its members, including but not limited to worship, study, training, missions, prayer, ministry, and evangelism.

A pastor shall be called and elected by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose. One week notice must be given to each active member by mail, and an announcement of such meeting must be given publicly from the pulpit one week in advance.

Election shall be by ballot, requiring a count of members present. Election shall require a minimum of three-fourths of members present voting affirmatively.

The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the request of the church.

The church will follow the same procedure in dismissal of a pastor. A two week, or otherwise mutually acceptable, notice should be given to the church and pastor.

Whenever a vacancy for pastor occurs, a special meeting shall be called for the purpose of nominating a pulpit committee which shall consist of a minimum of two members of one gender and three members of the other gender members and an alternate of each gender.

Of the proposed members, for each gender, that individual with the highest votes will be elected. The next highest vote, of both genders, will be the alternates (male and female). In the event that the church membership is less than one hundred members (100), the pulpit committee shall be comprised of five to nine members. In the event that the church membership is over one hundred members, the pulpit committee shall be comprised of five to fifteen members.

The Pulpit Committee shall present the church and be charged with the responsibility of seeking a pastor. The Pulpit Committee will be dissolved upon the election of a pastor.

To relieve the Pulpit Committee, an Interim/Supply Committee of three shall be nominated and elected for the purpose of securing the interim supply pastor.

The pastor shall have charge of the welfare and oversight of the church and shall preside in all regular services of the church and the church council meetings, but it is not necessary for the pastor to attend individual committee meetings, but if he does he does so as an ex officio, non-voting member.

The pastor shall be responsible for selecting a supply pastor during any absence from the pulpit.

The pastor shall serve as Moderator and shall preside at all business meetings. The Chairman of Deacons shall serve in the absence of the Moderator. In the absence of both, the Vice Chairman of the Deacons shall preside. In the absence of all three, a temporary moderator may be elected.

## **B. Deacons**

The deacons shall serve the church in all its ministries and programs. A deacon shall faithfully attend all deacons' meetings and if unable to attend, shall notify the chairman in advance. They shall assist the pastor in serving the elements of the Lord's Supper Table and be responsible for serving the church in all areas of discipline.

Deacons shall serve on a rotational basis for a three-year term. After serving a term of three years, a deacon shall be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of at least one year.

On the first Sunday in August of each year, candidates for deacons shall be nominated by the church. All nominees including new candidates and/or any candidate that is an inactive deacon, must currently meet the qualifications of the New Testament. An examination committee of the pastor and active deacons shall meet with the candidates and examine their qualifications prior to the election.

On the first Sunday in September, after Labor Day, the church shall vote by secret ballot for the required number of deacons to be elected. All who are elected shall serve for a period of three years.

Should a deacon resign or otherwise be unable to perform his duties during his term of office, the church shall nominate qualified candidates to complete the unexpired term of office. An examination committee of the pastor and active deacons shall meet with the candidates and examine their qualifications prior to the election to fill the unexpired slot. Election by secret ballot will be held at a special called meeting to be announced from the pulpit at each service for two weeks in advance of the election.

### **Qualifications**

1. The qualifications of the office of deacon shall be those found in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13.
2. Shall be at least 21 years old.
3. **Shall not be an ordained Minister of the Gospel and on the staff of El Bethel Baptist Church or any other church as long as he is a deacon at El Bethel Baptist Church. (Revision by church vote on 3/13/2011)**
4. Shall be an active member in good standing with the church for a minimum of one calendar year.
5. Shall be a tither.
6. Shall support the ministries of the church.

The deacon is a co-laborer with the pastor in implementing the ministry and functions of the church. He does not replace the pastor in performing work that the pastor alone is called to do and should do. Instead, pastor and deacons stand together as partners in a spiritual task.

### **C. Board of Deacons**

Generally, there shall be a minimum of four deacons, and/or as many as the church deems necessary. The emphasis shall be to have qualified deacons. The church could have more or less than four, qualifications being the primary factor and number being secondary.

The deacons shall organize themselves into a body consisting of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and members. The Chairman shall appoint any necessary committees to carry out the function of deaconship. The Chairman shall serve only one year and be eligible to

serve again following the lapse of one year.

The deacons shall have at least one meeting a month, and more if the need arises. The minutes of all deacon meetings shall be made available to any member of the church upon request.

Some responsibilities include:

Baptism:

1. See that the baptism dressing rooms are properly prepared with clean robes, towels, hair dryer, and other necessary items for the candidates.
2. Coordinate with the pastor in order to see that all the candidates are notified well in advance of the time and place of baptism.
3. Assist the pastor in arranging the candidates in proper order.
4. Assist the pastor in instructions for baptism.
5. Insure that the baptism robes are clean and in good condition.
6. Assist the candidates from the pool to their dressing areas.
7. See that the proper amount of water is in the pool and that it is at the proper temperature.

Benevolence:

1. Investigate and supervise all appeals for financial aid.
2. Minister any person who has a legitimate immediate need.
3. Secure proper information for the church records.
4. Determine the amount of help given.
5. Determine a repayment plan if applicable.

Lord's Supper:

The deacons shall be charged with making all preparations for the Lord's Supper and shall have custody of the communion equipment and supplies. Any ordained deacon in attendance may be asked to help in administering the Lord's Supper.

1. Prepare a sufficient amount of bread and number of cups filled for the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.
2. Prepare the table for the ordinance.
3. Secure and maintain all equipment and material necessary for the ordinance.
4. Following the ordinance, see that the cups and trays as well as all equipment and linen used are carefully cleaned and stored in a clean place for the next observance.

Nominating:

To discover, interview, enlist and propose for election by the church all volunteer positions.

1. Select, interview, and enlist church program leaders, church committee persons, and general church officers.
2. Approve workers before they are invited to serve in leadership positions.
3. Assign leaders to positions according to needs and the Spiritual Gifts of the individual.
4. Assist the church approved volunteer leadership to discover and enlist qualified persons to fill all other positions of leadership and ministry.
5. Present the enlisted volunteers to the church for approval.
6. Continue to work with the church program and ministry leaders throughout the year as vacancies or new openings present themselves.

Personnel:

To assist the church in matters related to all personnel.

1. Determine staff needs such as salaries, benefits, and other compensation.
2. Work in cooperation with the appropriate committees as requested by a search committee when the need to employ ministerial staff arises.
3. Provide advice and counsel to ministerial and non-ministerial employees in conjunction with the appropriate supervisory staff member.
4. Consult with the Stewardship Finance Committee in budgeting for any additional professional and support staff members.
5. Review, evaluate, and recommend any changes that are appropriate for benefits (such as adequate Worker's Compensation coverage) and other compensation items.
6. Review Performance Appraisals annually.
7. Recommend all employed personnel for every staff position.
8. Receive all complaints from employees who have been unable to secure an adequate hearing from their supervisor.

**ARTICLE III    General Church Officers**

**A. Moderator**

The pastor shall serve as the moderator of the church and, in his absence, he shall serve as the Chairman of the Deacons. If no pastor is serving, the interim pastor shall serve as the moderator of the church and, in his absence, he shall serve as the Chairman of the Deacons. If there is no pastor, interim, or Chairman of the Deacons, the Vice Chairman of Deacons shall have authority to call the church into a business session for election of moderator pro tempore.

## **B. Clerk**

The clerk shall be responsible for keeping accurate minutes of all meetings of the church and for recording the reception and dismissal of membership. The clerk shall issue letters of transfer and write for letters of recommendation as authorized by the church. The clerk shall be elected annually with the general officers of the church; be responsible for obtaining three copies of each meeting: one for the clerk's records, one for the church secretary, and one for the pastor.

## **C. Treasurer**

The church treasurer shall be elected annually. The treasurer shall be responsible to the church seeing that the books are always open to any member who offers a reasonable desire to see them. They shall be responsible to see that timely financial reports are made to the church. The treasurer shall be responsible to the church for all other pertinent information relating to the financial status of the church.

The treasurer shall be responsible to see that all monies of the church are received and records of receipts and disbursements are kept accurately. Provide a monthly financial report and shall be directed by the church and/or Stewardship Committee in disbursing any monies over the amount of \$200.00, that are not budgeted.

All disbursements from the church's checking accounts or withdrawals from savings accounts shall be by counter-signature, one of which shall be that of the treasurer, the other signature shall be from among the members of the Stewardship Committee.

The books will be ready for audit by the Stewardship Committee and/or church at the end of each church year.

## **D. Trustee**

The trustees shall be officers of the El Bethel Baptist Church Holding Corporation, Inc., a corporation not for profit, and shall have authority to sell, barter, trade, and/or give any and all property of the church, both real and tangible, as directed by the church. If at any time any trustee cannot fulfill his/her duties, their term of office shall be immediately terminated.

The trustees shall consist of three members, and these three shall serve on a rotating basis for a period of three years. One new trustee shall be elected each year and the one rotating off may not serve again until one year has elapsed.

## **ARTICLE IV Leadership Responsibilities**

**A. Sunday School Director** has the general supervision of the Sunday School.

The director will oversee all of the department directors, teachers, and workers; see that the proper literature and equipment is furnished for all departments and classes of the Sunday School; plan and promote all the work of the Sunday School throughout the church.

The director will be elected annually by the vote of the church upon recommendation by the Church Nominating Committee.

**B. Sunday School Teacher** facilitates learning of the Gospel in age-appropriate settings. The Sunday School Teacher is a member of the membership committee. Such responsibilities include:

1. Visit each new member and encourage them to become regular in attendance at all services of the church.
2. Determine if the new member has any needs to which the church needs to minister.
3. Share the Mission Statement of our church, suggesting how they might be an important part of our mission.
4. Answer any questions which may come up during the course of the visit.

**C. Men's Ministry Director**

The Men's Ministry Director will plan and promote all the work of the Men's Ministry; be responsible for planning the Missionary education for the men and boys of the church; report regularly to the church concerning the activities of the Men's Ministry.

**D. Women's Ministry Director**

The Women's Ministry Director will plan and promote all the work of the Women's Ministry; be responsible for planning the Missionary education for the women and girls of the church; report regularly to the church concerning the activities of the Women's Ministry.

**E. Chairman of Deacons**

The Chairman of Deacons is responsible for the work and leadership of all the deacons of the church. He shall assign the active deacons for the Lord's Supper Committee .

## **ARTICLE V Committees**

### **Types of Committees**

The Church shall have the following general committees; Building & Grounds, Evangelism & Discipleship, Finance, Membership, and Personnel. Election and duties of these committees are defined in the Bylaws.

The Pastor shall have the privilege at his discretion to meet with all committees as an ex-officio member, however, on the finance committee and a pastor search committee seeking a senior pastor, he may serve in an advisory role only.

**A. Types of Committees:**

**1. Ad Hoc Committees.** These committees which operate only long enough to accomplish specific tasks. These committees are formed and disbanded as needed.

**2. Standing (Regular) Committees.** These are committees established by the church for the purpose of long-term ministry. The work of these committees usually revolves around the ongoing needs of the church ministries and programs.

**B. Standing Committees are:**

**1. Properties Committee** shall consist of three (3) members. The committee shall serve on a rotating basis, the member completing his/her third year rotating off each year. No one may be re-nominated or elected until a lapse of one church year.

**Purpose:** Responsible for the efficient, effective, and safe maintenance of all physical assets of the church. These will include buildings, internal and external maintenance and preventative maintenance, equipment, vehicles, and other motorized equipment, and other ministry equipment.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Maintain adequate and attractive church property.
2. Maintenance of all church property and equipment.
3. Determine the necessary repairs and/or improvements for the church properties and equipment.
4. Maintain a complete inventory of all the church equipment.
5. Responsible for the supervision and authority to loan church equipment.
6. Schedule for adequate and appropriate preventive maintenance, repair and renovation

of physical spaces, equipment, and buildings.

7. Evaluate and coordinate adequate budget resources to effectively and efficiently maintain the physical plant by preparing an annual budget.

**2. Stewardship and Finance Committee** shall consist of three (3) members. The committee shall serve on a rotating basis, the member completing his/her third year rotating off each year. No one may be re-nominated or elected until a lapse of one church year.

**Purpose:**

To lead the church in the understanding, commitment, and implementation of the Biblical principles of stewardship in order to carry out the mission of the church.

**Responsibilities:**

1. Develop and implement an education program of stewardship emphasis for the church.
2. Administer the budget.
3. Establish counting and tellering procedures for all funds collected.
4. Prepare and present to the church the annual budget in cooperation with the staff and lay leadership.
5. See that the quarterly contribution records are sent to each contributor.
6. See that proper records and procedures of finances are implemented and maintained.
7. Provide for an annual audit of all books and accounts of the church at the end of each church year, when requested.

**3. Evangelism and Discipleship Committee** shall consist of three (3) members. The committee shall serve on a rotating basis, the member completing his/her third year rotating off each year.

**Purpose:**

To organize outreach programs in congregation and community, supervises missionary education and endeavors, visits prospective members, encourages prayer life and Bible studies and suggests annual projects.

### **Responsibilities:**

1. Stimulate and lead all members of the congregation in continuous and, from time to time, concerted endeavors to reawaken the spirituality indifferent and to reach others, who are as yet unsaved, with the Gospel;
2. Plan, promote and carry out an evangelism program in the congregation and in the community;
3. Arrange for the maintenance of a prospective membership file;
4. Enlist aid in visiting prospective members of the church;
5. Use the various modern avenues of communication available to spread the Word of God and the activities of the congregation in the local community;
6. Annually suggest evangelism projects which can be undertaken by auxiliary organizations in the congregation;
7. Plan for and encourage family prayers, devotions and Bible studies;
8. Devote itself to deepening the spiritual life of the congregation and surrounding community;
9. Oversee the Christian education and discipleship activities of the Church;

## **ARTICLE VII Meetings**

### **A. Worship**

1. Public services shall be held steadily on the Lord's Day as desired by the church and at any special time the church shall deem necessary.
2. Special meetings shall be at the discretion of the church and/or pastor.
3. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated one Sunday each quarter, or at such other times as the church desires.

### **B. Business**

1. The second Sunday of each quarter shall be set aside for the regular business meeting unless otherwise provided. **(Revision per church vote 12/16/2012 to read: second Sunday of January, April, July, October to allow a full quarter's report at each meeting since church fiscal year begins in October. If a conflict arises, an adjustment can be made for that month.)**
2. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the church may, with or without notice, act upon the reception of members or upon the dismissal of members to other churches and upon the

appointment of delegates to councils, but not upon other business.

3. The pastor may, and shall when requested by the deacons, trustees, or a standing committee, call from the pulpit a special meeting, the particular object of the meeting being clearly stated in the notice and read from the pulpit at both morning and evening worship services preceding the meeting. No other business can be transacted at the meeting except that stated.

4. Special meetings of the church may also be called by the clerk upon written application of any five adult members specifying the object therefore, which notice shall be read at both worship services on the next Lord's Day preceding the day fixed for such meeting, with the exception of calling or dismissal of a pastor as stated in Article II.

5. The finances of the church shall be derived from the tithes, offerings, and/or any special gifts. Special offerings will be taken for the MacGuire State Mission, Annie Armstrong Offering, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, Mother's Day Children's Home Offering, and World Hunger. Other special offerings may be taken as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Pastor.

6. Only resident members age sixteen or older and present, including those serving in the nursery during the time of the Church meeting, shall be eligible to vote at Church business meetings. Ballots are to be counted immediately by a tally committee consisting of active deacons. Absentee ballots and proxy voting are not allowed. If there are no active deacons present, the moderator shall appoint a tally committee of at least two members. Results of the balloting will be announced during the same business meeting unless otherwise stated in these bylaws or announced prior to the voting. Ballots shall be maintained in the Church office as a matter of record for 30 days.

#### **ARTICLE VIII Amendments**

This constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present at any regular meeting of the church, or at a called meeting for that specified purpose, the proposed amendment being inserted in the call. Said proposed change having been laid before the church in writing at a business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed action, and read from the pulpit on the next Lord's Day preceding such proposal. Members must be counted at said meeting to determine the required two-thirds necessary.

#### **ARTICLE IX Government of the Church**

The government of the Church shall be in the hands of the members, and the members present at regular and called business meetings shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

The Church year shall begin October 1 and end September 30. The Church's financial year shall run concurrently with the Church year.

Regular business meetings of the Church shall be conducted on the Second Sunday of the last month of each quarter (December, March, June & September). **\*\*Revised by church vote on March 14, 2013 to read: January; April; July; October on the Second Sunday of the respective month.**

The order of the business shall be as follows:

- (a) Reading of minutes
- (b) Organization Reports
- (c) Committee Reports
- (d) Treasurer's Report
- (e) Report from Deacons & Trustees
- (f) Unfinished Business
- (g) New Business
- (h) Adjournment

A written agenda for the business meeting will be presented to the church prior to the meeting. Business items not on the agenda, but brought up on the floor of the business meeting will be referred to the Board of Deacons or appropriate committee for consideration and action by the congregation, if appropriate. A three-fourths vote of the members present at a Church Conference is required to override the referral of non-agenda items and allow discussion and a vote on new business. Any non-agenda item that does not reach a three-fourths vote will be considered by the Board of Deacons and the recommendation or finding thereof shall be provided to the members at the next business meeting.

### **Rules of Order**

In all cases of order, the moderator shall rule but an appeal may be made to the conference and a majority of two-thirds of members present may reverse the decision. The meeting shall be opened and closed with prayer. The Pastor, or in his absence, the chairman of the Deacons, shall act as moderator of all business meetings of the church, or he shall appoint another member of the Deacons to act as moderator.

1. No member shall speak more than once on the subject until every member wishing to speak shall have had liberty to do so and then not more than twice without leave of the conference.

2. The members in debate shall refrain from making unkind remarks and/or disturbances. Such persons shall be stopped by the moderator as soon as they manifest any ill temper.

3. The Church Covenant, Constitution, By-Laws, and Rules of Order shall be read at such times as the conference deems fit.

4. All questions of parliamentary law and practice not herein provided for shall be decided in accordance with the Robert's Rules of Order.

5. Approval of motions, resolutions, or other business to be transacted requiring a vote of the church members shall be by a majority of those members present at the meeting during which such business is considered.

6. For the purpose of this section a quorum shall consist of all members present at the business meeting.

7. It shall be the duty of the moderator to keep order.

8. A motion before the church must be disposed of before another motion can be entertained, unless the motion is to amend, postpone, adjourn, or call for the previous motion.

9. Every member who speaks shall rise and first address the moderator.

10. On any point of order a member may appeal from the moderator to the church, whose decision shall be final.

11. All motions shall be carried by the vote of the majority of voting members present, unless stated otherwise in the bylaws.

## **ARTICLE X Authority**

All authority on matters involving the church is vested in the congregation acting in business session. The congregation shall meet in business session regularly and in special meetings called as often as needed.