

Constitution & By-Laws



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Member Commitment Agreement

I, _____, have thoroughly read the constitution and bylaws of Christ Church of Acadiana as amended of this date. Having studied with care these provisions, including the statement of faith and covenant, by my signature below I signify that I am fully aware of their provisions and agree to carry out my duties as a member of the Christ Church of Acadiana. I further agree to submit to the authority of the Christ Church of Acadiana as set out in this document. If at any time my commitment deviates from that here stated, I promise to bring that fact immediately to the attention of the pastor of the Christ Church of Acadiana.

Dated this _____ day of _____, _____.

Member Signature

CONSTITUTION

Article I: Name

The name of this church shall be Christ Church of Acadiana.

Article II: Foundation, Object and Priorities of Ministry

1. The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11), and its code of guidance in all its affairs, the Word of God, and this Church does here affirm its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31).
2. The object of this Church shall be to worship God according to the teaching of His Word, to practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament, to sustain its ordinances and doctrines, to educate our children in a Christ-centered environment and according to a Christ-centered curriculum, (Deut. 6) and to preach and propagate among all peoples the Gospel of Salvation which is by personal faith on Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
3. The priorities of ministry of this church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), strengthen the vision in nurture and education of our children and fellow believers (1 Corinthians 14:26; 2 Peter 3:18), and spread the vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (1 Peter 2:9; 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20; 5:16).

Affirmation of Our Faith

A. The Word of God

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31, 32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

B. The Trinity

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, 3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19, 20; Ephesians 4:5, 6

C. God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1,2; 2:5,6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

D. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9,10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Timothy 3:16

E. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. John 14:16,17,26; 15:26,27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

F. Regeneration

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. Genesis 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Ecclesiastes 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Rev. 19:3,20; 20:10; 14,15; 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

G. The Church

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25

H. Christian Conduct

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15,23-24; 1 John 2:3-6; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 1:9-10

I. The Ordinances

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

J. Religious Liberty

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other. 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9, 12

K. The Last Things

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked. Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15

L. Human Sexuality

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1

Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4) We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

M. Abortion

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

N. Euthanasia

We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment. (Exodus 20:13, 23:7; Matthew 5:21; Acts 17:28)

O. Lawsuits between Believers

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32)

P. Authority of Statement of Faith

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members. All teaching literature used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.

Our Church Covenant

1. Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.
2. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; 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.
3. We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.
4. 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 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.
5. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a church where we can carry out the articles of this confession and the spirit of this covenant.

Article III: Membership

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by a living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this Church, who have been baptized and who have been received into its membership according to the By- Laws of this Church.

This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the council of elders. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The council of elders shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church.

Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The council of elders has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the council of elders be treated as a trespasser.

A member may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church and the minutes of the proceedings of church meetings and of board meetings, provided he shall have made a written request upon the church and the church has received the written request at least five business days before the requested inspection date

A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, the list of names and addresses of the church members, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.

The church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material, for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.

Article IV: Leadership and Organization

1. Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the Congregation of the Church is the final authority within this local Church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of officers to govern the Church. However, the vote of the membership of this Church at a properly called meeting, as provided in the By-Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions:
 - a. Accept members into the Church, give letters of transfer or recommendation to members, or drop members from the Church roll;
 - b. Elect officers of the Church;
 - c. Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from office;
 - d. Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property;
 - e. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting;
 - f. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this church;
2. The offices of the Church shall be Elder and Deacon. The purpose of the officers of the Church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.
3. The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the Council of Elders who are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.

4. Deacons shall assist the Council of Elders by performing services of advice, administration and implementation.

Article V: The Church Property

1. In the event of a division of this Church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this Church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the Church membership before recognizing a division therein provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division.
2. Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the Church work cannot continue, the Church property shall be transferred to Evangeline Baptist Association of Lafayette, LA.
3. Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same doctrine and practice be advisable, the Council of Elders shall be authorized by the Church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this Church is concerned.

Article VI: Revisions, Additions and Amendments

1. Revisions, additions or amendments of this constitution may be made only in the following manner:
 - a. at annual business meeting; and
 - b. by two-thirds majority of those members present and voting at such meeting, provided at least ten percent (10%) of the resident membership of the Church is present at such meeting; and
 - c. If notice of the proposed change or addition has been given, in writing and from the pulpit on at least two Sundays in the interim period between said meetings.
2. Article II and VI of this constitution shall not be repealed, amended nor revised.

BY-LAWS

Article I: Membership

Section 1: General Procedure

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the Church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members, or upon transfer of members to other churches. Reception of members may, without special notice, be acted on by groups, within the Church, more limited than the full membership of the Church, using procedures specifically authorized by vote of the Church at a regular business meeting upon recommendation of the Council of Elders.

Section 2: Admission by Baptism

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of change of heart, and having accepted the faith, aims and ideals of this Church as expressed in the Affirmation of Faith and the Church Covenant, may be received into membership by baptism, upon recommendation of the Council of Elders

Section 3: Admission by Letter

Members from other Baptist churches holding like faith may be received as members with us upon presentation of letters of transfer from such churches, and upon acceptance of the faith, aims and ideals of this Church as expressed in the Affirmation of Faith and the Church Covenant. If such credentials be of older date than six months prior to their presentation, the applicant may be required to furnish additional information.

Section 4: Admission by Experience or Restoration

All applicants for membership other than by baptism or by letter of transfer, that is by Christian experience if previously baptized, or by restoration, shall be received into the church in the same way as those by baptism, except the ordinance shall not be administered.

Section 5: Instruction to New Members

All persons uniting with this Church in any of the ways set forth in Sections 2 through 4 above shall previously, by the Council of Elders, be made acquainted with the Church Covenant and the Affirmation of Faith. New members shall pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations as to worship, service, and giving, when they make public profession of faith and join the church.

Section 6: Dismissal of Members

Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligations to the Church, or satisfactorily arranged the same with the Elders, shall upon request be granted a letter of transfer to unite with such Baptist Church as they may designate. Such letter of transfer shall be sent to the Pastor or the Clerk of the Church the member intends to join and shall be valid only for six months, but may be renewed after that time by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders if satisfactory reasons be given for the non-use. These limitations of time shall be included in the letter of transfer. Members who shall unite with another church without such letter shall be dropped from the Church roll.

Members, who move from this city, shall supply the Church with their new address and apply for a letter of dismissal within one year provided there be a church of the same faith and order in the place to which they move. If necessary, it shall be the duty of the Council of Elders to remind such member of their duties in this respect. In case there is no such church in the place, or there are circumstances which render it inadvisable to change membership, the member shall report to the Church as often as once a year at least, in person or by letter and by contribution. All non-resident members who do not so report shall be subject to dismissal by the Church after appropriate efforts have been made to contact the member and remind them of their duties.

The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding three months. Upon good cause being shown to the council of elders, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the council of elders.

Article II: Church Government

Section 1: General Statement

Officers

The Officers of the Church shall be a Council of Elders and the Deacons. Officers shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the Church as provided for in Article II, Section 2 and Section 3 of these By-Laws. All officers of the Church shall be members of the Church in good and regular standing having full agreement and no reservation with the Christ Church statement of faith. The Council of Elders shall be composed of men; the Deacons shall be composed of men.

Committees and Appointees

The Council of Elders has the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The Council of Elders has the authority to dissolve any committee or position which it created. The Council of Elders also has the authority to appoint Elders, Deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members

of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions. The Deacons may nominate candidates for any committee or position, with appointment by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate to the Deacons the authority to appoint Deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and as agents of the Council of Elders in such positions. Every committee shall have a chairperson, responsible for the overall operation of the committee, who shall be appointed by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate the responsibility for selecting the chairperson to the Deacons or to the committee. (For example, such committees and positions may include a Missions Committee and a Christian Education Committee, among others.)

Section 2: Staff Pastors

Definition

Staff Pastors are those, who in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the church of Christ.

Duties

Staff Pastors shall perform the duties determined by the Board of Elders. The duties shall be in writing at the time of the call to service. Staff Pastors are to possess all the Biblical qualifications of an Elder though not necessarily serving on the elder board.

Vocational Call by the Church

The Elder Board shall call staff pastors.

Termination of Vocational Call by the Church

By resignation: The question of terminating the vocational call of a Staff Pastors shall be considered at any time by the church upon the presentation of the Staff Pastors's resignation.

Grievance: Where a grievance exists against a Staff Pastor, either due to his preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in Article II of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Staff Pastor, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedure prescribed in Article VII of these By-Laws. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of the Staff Pastor may be terminated at any business meeting upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a 2/3 majority of those members of the Church present and voting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays next preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

Section 3: Lay Officers

Definition

Lay officers are the Elders and Deacons of the Church.

Duties

Lay Elders and Deacons shall have the duties of their offices as described in Sections 4 and 5 below.

Calling

The Council of Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for lay Elder and

Deacon. The Council shall provide for individual members of the Church to nominate candidates to the Council as candidates for office and for the Council's further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the Council of Elders concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee stating the reasons for this conclusion. The Council of Elders shall present a ballot of candidates for calling or reaffirmation as Elders or Deacons to the congregation at the annual meeting. The Council of Elders may also nominate candidates for election.

Lay Elders and Deacons shall be called by the Church for a normal term of three years. They shall stand for reaffirmation not later than the third annual meeting of the church following their call or previous reaffirmation. Calling or reaffirmation of a lay Elder or Deacon shall be by two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at the meeting. Lay Elders and Deacons shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. Following two consecutive terms the Elder or Deacon will not serve actively in office for a period of one year. Following this period they are again eligible for nomination as Elder or Deacon. For purposes of this provision a term during which an Elder or Deacon serves not more than one year shall not be considered a term in office.

Removal

Resignation: An officer may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

Grievance: Where a grievance exists against an officer of the Church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in Article II, of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedures prescribed in Article VII of the By-Laws of this Church. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the officer may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays next preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

Lack of Reaffirmation: If a Lay Elder or Deacon stands for reaffirmation and fails to be reaffirmed, the Elder or Deacon shall be removed from office. Removal from office by this means shall not be considered disciplinary action.

Section 4: Council of Elders

Composition, Term, and Calling

The Council of Elders shall be composed of men, both Lay Elders and if applicable, Staff Pastor(s). The Council of Elders shall be composed of at least two members, with the number of Elders at any time determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the church. Each Lay Elder shall be called by the membership of the Church to a term of three years. That call and any reaffirmation(s) shall be conducted as provided in Article II, Sections 2 and 3 of these By-Laws.

Qualifications

Elders and nominees for Elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible.

Relevant texts include 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Elders are also required to be in full agreement with no reservation to the Christ Church statement of faith.

Responsibilities

The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church.

The responsibilities of the Elders shall include: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant, overseeing the process of Church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings, providing for reporting and recording of official Church business, overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conducting worship services, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church, and mobilizing the Church for world mission.

Organization

The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The Elders must meet at least once per month. Meetings of the Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Council provides otherwise, meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings of the Elders is defined as at least one-half of the Elders.

Section 5: Deacons

Composition, Term, and Calling

The Deacons shall be men. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the church. Each Deacon shall be called by the membership of the Church to a normal term of three years. The call and any reaffirmation shall be conducted as provided in Article II, Sections 2 and 3 of these By-Laws.

Qualifications

Deacons and nominees for Deacon shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include 1 Timothy 3:8-12.

Responsibilities

The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include:

1. Administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress;
2. The greeting and welcoming ministries of the church;
3. Assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel;
4. Assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church;
5. Caring for and maintaining the Church properties;
6. Administering the business affairs of the Church that pertain to its material assets.

Organization

The Deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the

mission of the church. The Elders or the Deacons may designate any specific Deacon or group of Deacons to specialize in some particular Deaconal function. Meetings of the Deacons, or subcommittees thereof, shall be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities of the Deacons.

Article III: Church Employees

In addition to Staff Pastors, the church may employ additional personnel. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the Elder Board. The Council of Elders shall be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel.

Article IV: Church Finances

Section 1: In General

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the Church. All money donated to the church must go through the church financial secretary and treasurer.

Section 2: Contributions

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum. Special offerings may be sought by the Church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Council of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the council of elders. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article II.

Section 3: Financial Planning

The financial planning of the Church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out of the various programs of its work. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders, or, if authorized by the Council, the Deacons or other committee. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay members of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate this responsibility provided such delegation is to lay Deacons or other lay members of the Church.

Section 4: Accounts

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Finance Secretary according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Treasurer of the Church shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the Church as detailed in the Budgets or other authorized designations. All moneys for missions shall be remitted in accordance with the Mission Budget of the Church or otherwise designated, preferably each month and not less than each quarter.

Section 5: Indebtedness

No note or contract exceeding 1% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the Church is pledged shall be made except by recommendation of the Council of Elders and

approved by the Church.

Section 6: Authority to Bind the Church

The Council of Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, the Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

Article V: Meetings

Section 1: For Worship

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month or at such other times as the Council of Elders may determine. Other religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the Church may require.

Section 2: For Business

The Annual Meeting

The annual meeting shall be held some time toward the end of the calendar year of the Church for the purpose of calling and reaffirming the officers, reviewing proposed budgets and other business. Officers called at the annual meeting shall assume their duties immediately after being called unless otherwise stated by the council of elders.

Special Meetings

The Council of Elders, or any ten members in good standing, may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these By-Laws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on especially important matters not otherwise provided for.

Quorum

Any number of members shall constitute a quorum at any ordinary meeting of the Church. At meetings dealing with particular matters stipulated in these By-Laws, the quorums prescribed shall apply. There will be no absentee voting unless previous notice has been given and exception granted by the elder board.

Rules Governing Business Meetings

The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling. The following order shall be observed at the regular church administration meetings. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.

Notice Provisions

Unless specifically defined in other sections of these By-Laws or the Constitution, "resident membership" means those members who reside within 75 miles driving distance from the church building; "notice . . . in writing" means a written announcement sent by regular U.S. mail, and "notice . . . from the pulpit" means an oral announcement at each of the Sunday morning services.

Article VI: Organization of Members for Ministry

Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry,

provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the Council of Elders as an official ministry of Northside Baptist Church. Such sanction shall be granted provided that 1) the object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and 2) the primary officers of the organization are: members of the church or other regular attendees of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Council of Elders. Sanction by the Council of Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the church.

Article VII: Discipline

- A. The official discipline of members shall be a responsibility of the Council of Elders under such rules and procedures as the Elders may from time to time establish on the basis of Scripture. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of prayer mingling Christian kindness, forbearance, and holy firmness under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- B. There shall be a discipline committee consisting of the council of elders. These men shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith and violations of the church covenant. If an elder or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a member of the discipline committee. The elders and deacons shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline.
- C. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.
- D. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
- E. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (C) and (D) have been taken, the council of elders as the church representatives Biblically responsible for putting down murmuring shall hear the matter. If the matter is not resolved during the hearing before the council of elders, the committee shall recommend to the members of the church that the member be removed from church membership until repentance and reconciliation be made. Excommunication becomes active immediately upon a majority vote of the present membership at any business meeting.
- F. No matter may be heard by the discipline committee or the church unless the steps outlined in subsections (B, C, and D) have been taken, except in the case of a public offense.
- G. The procedures provided in this section are based on Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 10-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.

Article VIII: Amendments

General

Amendments to these By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any business meeting, but shall not be acted on until the following annual meeting, at which time an affirmative vote of the majority of the membership of the Church, or a two-thirds majority of those members present at the

meeting and voting shall be required for acceptance; provided, however, that at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church be present at such meeting, and that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given on at least two Sundays to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.

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