

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF DOUGLASVILLE

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

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**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
DOUGLASVILLE, GEORGIA**

CONSTITUTION

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 in accordance with the principles of our faith (1 Corinthians 14:40). This constitution will preserve the liberties of each church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

I. Name

This body shall be known as First Baptist Church of Douglasville, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as the "Church"), located in Douglasville, Georgia. The Church maintains its principal address at 5900 Prestley Mill Road, Douglasville, GA 30135. The Officers of the Church shall have the full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another.

II. Purpose

This Church is a body of baptized believers, which has the Bible as its authority and The 2000 Baptist Faith & Message as its guide for faith and practice. The 2000 Baptist Faith & Message does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source for all that we believe. For purposes of the Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the Senior Pastor is the Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's application. The Church shall be Christ-centered, pastor-led, staff-directed, deacon-served, committee-advised, and congregationally-approved. Additionally, the Church is to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, provide a community of worship, and foster, encourage, support, organize, and assist all Great Commission work.

III. Affiliation

This Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in church planting and world missions, this Church voluntarily affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention in its international, national, state, and local expressions.

BYLAWS

Article I. Membership

Section 1. Qualifications for Membership

To qualify for membership in the Church, a person must commit to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and be baptized by immersion subsequent to their personal profession of faith. New members must fulfill the requirements of a “new member” class and affirm our Church Covenant.

Candidates for membership will be presented to the Church on a Sunday morning after they have met the qualifications and will become church members upon a church vote.

The Church has two classes of church members:

- A. Voting Members are members who are at least 18 years of age; and
- B. Youth Members are members who are less than 18 years of age.

Section 2. Church Membership Roll

The Church will maintain a roll reflecting the names and other necessary information of all members. This membership roll shall be updated from time to time. All persons in leadership positions must be Church members.

Section 3. Voting Rights of Members

At all meetings of the members, each Voting Member shall be entitled to cast one vote on all matters submitted to the members. The vote of a majority of the total number of Voting Members present at a meeting shall be required for approval of all matters submitted for a vote of the members, unless a higher threshold is specified in these Bylaws. Voting Members may not vote by proxy.

The taking of any of the following actions shall require the approval of the Voting Members.

- (1) Calling of a Senior Pastor;
- (2) Adoption or amendment of the Church budget;
- (3) Purchase, sale, or lease of real estate;
- (4) Entering into a contract with a term greater than five (5) years in length;
- (5) Borrowing money or pledging of Church assets;
- (6) Amending these Bylaws, the Constitution, or the articles of incorporation of the Church; and,
- (7) Approving proposed leadership positions (Deacons, Committee Members, Treasurer, Moderator, Clerk).

The Leadership Council or Deacons may submit any other matters to a vote of the Voting Members.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

Members shall be removed from the Church roll for the following reasons:

- (1) Death;
- (2) Transfer of membership to another church;
- (3) Personal request of the member;
- (4) Failure to affirm the Church Covenant within a reasonable time; and,
- (5) Dismissal following the process of discipline described below.

Section 5. Discipline

It shall be the basic purpose of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Senior Pastor, Pastoral Staff, and the Deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another member.

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by: (i) maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6); (ii) edifying believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Timothy 5:20); and (iii) promoting the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Pastoral Staff in consultation with the Deacons and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this Church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Pastoral Staff, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this Church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline, including members of the Pastoral Staff and Church employees.

Discipline will follow the biblical pattern set forth above and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the Church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participating in ministry and in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this Church. An individual may be disciplined by the Pastoral Staff short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance (for example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances a member of this Church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry). Because of the unity we have in Christ and our commitment to one another to promote the spiritual welfare of each member, during the course of the disciplinary process the member may not voluntarily terminate his or her membership with the Church.

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the Church, every reasonable measure will be taken to resolve the problem. However, if the serious condition is not addressed by the member and the member's life and conduct continues in such a way that the member is: (i) hindering the ministry influence of the Church in the community; (ii) hindering the operation of the Church; or (iii) the best interests of the Church would be served by discipline of the member, then the member is subject to dismissal from the Church.

The procedure for dismissal of a member shall be according to Matthew 18:15-20, with the approval by a majority of the Voting Members present at a church conference. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

Section 6. Restoration of Membership

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition which has made it necessary for the Church to exclude them may, upon their request, be restored to membership upon evidence of their repentance and reformation by the Senior Pastor and a vote of the majority of the Voting Members present at a church conference.

Article II. Church Meetings

Section 1. General Business

At any regular meeting for worship the Church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members or upon the appointment of delegates or messengers to regular conference and/or council meetings, but not on other business. The Senior Pastor shall be considered by virtue of his office an appointed messenger to all denominational meetings.

Section 2. Regular Church Conference

The Church shall conduct business at church conferences (also called "Business Meetings") which shall be held quarterly. The quorum at church conferences is simply the Voting Members present. At this time, written reports may be presented by the organizational leaders and from chairpersons of standing committees that have reports to the Church. Financial reports may be presented to the members. In addition, all non-special business matters may be approved during the regular church conference meeting. As a general practice, all voting unless specified in the Bylaws shall be by open voting. Written ballots shall be used only if recommended by the Deacons, called for by these Bylaws, or called for under normal parliamentary procedures.

These church conference meeting dates may be scheduled by announcement at a prior church conference, and/or one week in advance from the pulpit, the Church Newsletter, the bulletin, or some form of electronic communication.

Section 3. Annual Business Meeting

An Annual Business Meeting is held to elect officers, approve committee members, and adopt the annual church budget. The quorum at the Annual Business Meeting is simply the Voting Members present. Notice of the date, time, and place of the Annual Business Meeting shall be provided at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting or announced at all worship services at least two (2) Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 4. Special Business Meeting

Special Business Meetings may be called at any time by the Officers, the Senior Pastor, the Deacons, or the Leadership Council for any purpose. Those Voting Members in attendance shall constitute a quorum. The special business meeting will consider special matters of significant nature (such as the call of the Senior Pastor, purchase of property, approval for major non-budget financial matters exceeding \$20,000, and approval for new buildings and/or major building refurbishment). The Deacon body should provide a recommendation to the Church for each special business matter. All special business must be approved by church conference action.

A minimum one-week notice, with announcement from pulpit, the church newsletter, or through electronic communication concerning the subject, date, time, etc., must be given for the specially called business meeting.

Section 5. Emergency Operations

In the event that Business Meetings are not able to be held in-person in a timely manner, matters that would otherwise be decided by a vote of the Members shall be approved by the Senior Pastor and Deacons as follows. The Senior Pastor and staff will evaluate the needs, make recommendations for decisions or actions to be taken, and seek input into those decisions from the Leadership Council. Any financial implications will be addressed by the Budget & Finance Committee. The recommended decision will be provided to the Deacons for discussion and approval. Upon approval by the Deacons, the church will be notified. Any such action shall be ratified by the Members at the first Business Meeting following such action.

Section 6. Church Incorporation

This Church shall maintain its power of corporation through the State of Georgia for the purpose of conducting church business and for protecting the Trustees and those who sign necessary documents from personal liability.

Section 7. Quorum

The quorum consists of those who attend any church conference, provided it is properly called.

Section 8. Parliamentary Rules

The authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the Church shall be Robert's Rule of Order, Revised, in accordance with the Moderator's knowledge of parliamentary procedures.

Article III. Church Officers and Employees

Section 1. Introduction

All Church Officers must be members of the Church and in harmony with its ministries and objectives. The officers of the Church shall be: Pastors, Deacons, Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, and Trustees.

The Pastors become Church Officers upon Church membership and remain Officers as long as they are active in a staff position. Deacons are Church Officers when they are serving active terms. The other (elected) Church Officers are to be recommended by the Leadership Council, approved by the Deacons, and elected by the Church. Church officers are responsible to the Church. The Deacons, as ordained representatives of the church, shall have the authority to recommend to the Church body, if necessary, to remove such officers from their position.

Section 2. The Leadership Council

The Leadership Council will consist of the Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor (one of the Pastoral Staff members), Chairman of the Deacons, the Vice-Chairman of the Deacons, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, the Treasurer, and the Moderator. The Senior Pastor will lead meetings of the Leadership Council, and the Chairman of the Deacons will lead in the event of the absence of the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor may convene meetings of the Leadership Council to obtain advice and recommendations, as necessary or desirable. Meetings of the Leadership Council may also be called by a majority of the Leadership Council or a majority of the Church Officers.

Section 3. Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament church. He has the responsibility under God's authority to provide direction to the Church with the understanding that he is accountable to the Deacons and regarding financial matters, to the Budget and Finance Committee. Recognizing the value of lay leadership, the Senior Pastor will present any major changes in Church programs to the Deacons before such changes are implemented.

The Senior Pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. As such he works with the Deacons and church staff to: 1) lead the Church in performing tasks, 2) lead the Church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application, 3) proclaim the gospel, and 4) care for the Church's members and other persons in the community. The Senior Pastor may utilize committees and organizations as he deems necessary to accomplish these objectives.

The Senior Pastor shall continue in office so long as both parties are agreed to the relation of pastor and the Church. He shall be at liberty to resign the care of the Church on giving to the Deacons thirty days' written notice of his intention. The Deacons will then make an appropriate recommendation to the Church. The Church shall have the right to dispense with his services on giving similar notice. The thirty days' notice may be dispensed with by mutual consent of the Senior Pastor and people.

As a rule, a periodic vote of confidence for the Senior Pastor will not be taken in the Church. However, should the Deacons determine that there is a need to take a vote of confidence, then they shall call for such a vote. Following the vote, the deacon body will make an appropriate recommendation to

the Church concerning the results of the vote of confidence for the Senior Pastor. If the recommendation of the deacon body is for the Church to vote on removal of the Senior Pastor, a vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of members voting is required in favor of removal. The Deacons will administer the voting, count the ballots, and report the result to the Church.

Section 4. Pastor Search

When a vacancy of the Senior Pastor occurs, the Leadership Council, under the leadership of the Executive Pastor or another member of the Pastoral Staff, shall have four responsibilities. First, they shall provide speakers to preach in the regular worship services until a Senior Pastor or Interim Senior Pastor is selected. Second, they shall determine whether the needs of the church are best served with an Interim Senior Pastor, or if instead the Church should have the Pastoral Staff and external speakers preach in the regular worship services. Third, they shall set in motion a Pastor Search Committee for the Senior Pastor. Fourth, they shall ensure that the daily operations of the Church are carried out by the Church staff.

The Leadership Council will provide a recommendation to the Church concerning whether to search for an Interim Senior Pastor, and if so, what his responsibilities will be to the Church. If the Church approves the hiring of an Interim Senior Pastor, the Leadership Council shall seek out and recommend to the Church a committee of three Deacons to search for a suitable candidate. The candidate who is recommended as Interim Senior Pastor shall be voted upon by the Church with a simple majority being final. This Interim Senior Pastor shall not be considered for the Senior Pastor position by the Pastor Search Committee.

The Leadership Council will seek out seven people to serve on the Pastor Search Committee. Three of those people must be active Deacons. The other four should represent the Church at large. The congregation shall be invited to submit names for consideration to serve on the Pastor search committee. Deacon officers shall determine the time and manner to accept names for consideration. The persons considered for this committee should be active Voting Members of this Church who have earned the respect of fellow church members by their demonstrated Christian maturity and who are not currently employees of this Church.

The Leadership Council shall select and present the nominations to the Deacons for approval. If accepted, this group shall be presented to the church in conference. A simple majority vote of affirmation will constitute this committee. Following approval, the Search Committee will select one of its members as chairman.

The committee shall enthusiastically pursue the task of searching for a Senior Pastor. The committee shall actively pursue only one man at a time who will lead the church in accomplishing its mission in accordance with the mission statement of the church.

When the committee is ready, they will first present the prospective Senior Pastor to the Deacons for interview and approval. The Deacons will then organize an opportunity for the congregation to meet with the prospective pastor for a time of questions and mutual understanding.

The Pastor Search Committee and Deacons will then present to the church a motion to extend a call. This will take place on a Sunday morning conference. Voting will be done by written ballot with provisions made for absentee ballots. A favorable vote of seventy five percent (75%) of members voting will extend a call to the Senior Pastor. The Deacons will administer the voting, count the ballots, and report the result to the church.

Section 5. Church Staff

Pastoral Staff Members

Pastoral staff members shall include all ordained pastors elected by the Church. Recognizing the value of harmony between Senior Pastor and pastoral staff regarding basic theology, church philosophy, and leadership style, the Church extends to the Senior Pastor the right to submit staff nominations as described below.

When a vacancy occurs in a previously budgeted staff position, the Senior Pastor will initiate a search for a suitable replacement. He may, at his discretion, appoint an advisory committee to assist him.

When a nomination is ready, the candidate will be presented to the Deacons with sufficient time for evaluation and recommendation. The Senior Pastor and Deacons will then present the candidate to the Church for approval. This will take place on a Sunday morning conference. A favorable vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of members voting will extend a call to the pastor. The Deacons will administer the voting, count the ballots, and report the result to the Church.

Should a new full-time pastoral staff position be considered, the Deacons must approve the creation of the position and the Budget and Finance Committee must authorize funding for it. The request must then be submitted to the Church for a vote. A favorable vote will authorize the Senior Pastor to initiate a search to fill that position as described above.

The pastoral staff members serve at the will of the Senior Pastor. Should it become necessary for the Senior Pastor to dismiss a staff pastor, the Senior Pastor will give an explanation to the Deacons prior to such dismissal.

Pastoral staff members are not eligible to serve on the Budget and Finance Committee nor on the Pastor Search Committee.

Other Church Employees

All Church employees are under the authority and leadership of the Senior Pastor as chief administrative officer of the Church. The Senior Pastor may delegate these administrative duties. However, the final authority to hire, supervise, evaluate, and dismiss, if necessary, support staff personnel shall remain with the Senior Pastor.

Church employees who are not pastoral staff members are not officers of the church and are not eligible to serve on the Budget and Finance Committee nor on the Pastor Search Committee.

Section 6. Deacons

In accordance with the meaning of the work and practice of the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the Church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the Senior Pastor and staff in performing pastoral ministry tasks: proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers; care for church members and other persons in the community; lead the Church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application; and lead the Church in performing its task. The deacon body shall also act as an

advisory council and submit recommendations to the Church on important matters, not otherwise provided for in these by-laws.

The Deacons shall serve on a three-year rotation system. Each year the term of office of one-third of the number of active Deacons shall expire and an election shall be held to fill vacancies. The deacon year shall begin January 1 and expire December 31.

After serving a term of three years, a deacon shall be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of at least one year. If a deacon has filled an unexpired term of another deacon, he may serve another three-year term before being required to have a one-year lapse.

Deacons shall be elected by the Church following a selection/examination process by a Deacon Nominating Committee. This committee shall be composed of Deacons completing their present term, the current Chairman of Deacons, and the Senior Pastor. This committee is to be chaired by the current Chairman of Deacons.

The congregation shall be invited to submit names for consideration to the Deacon Nominating Committee. The Deacon Nominating Committee is to compile a list of qualified men to present to the Church for election during the annual business meeting. The committee is to be guided in the selection of men as based on the following criteria; first, spiritual qualities as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-3; second, minimum age of 25; third, not a current employee of the Church or the spouse of an employee; fourth, regular attendance in church services; fifth, church stewardship (time, talent, money); sixth, attitude in harmony with church objectives and mission; and seventh, willingness to serve and perform prescribed deacon duties.

The number of men selected to serve as Deacon beginning for a new three-year period should be no more than nine individuals. A list of qualified men who have agreed to serve should be publicized by the Church prior to set election date. From this list of nominated Deacons, up to seven Deacons shall be elected each year by a vote of the congregation. These Deacon vacancies will be filled in order of nominees receiving the highest number of votes. If there is a tie or ties for the last position of such vote, all such nominated Deacons tying for such last position shall be considered elected. After such Deacons are elected and before such names are announced to the congregation, the Deacon body shall meet and select up to two additional Deacons to be added to list elected by the congregation. These additional Deacons may be, but do not have to be, the Deacons receiving the next highest votes in the congregational voting.

The Deacon body shall establish rules and procedures as necessary to provide administrative control of its duties and business. Deacon officers shall be elected annually by the Deacon body. Newly elected officers will initiate Deacon training and set up organization for new church year. A Deacon emeritus program may recognize Deacons with distinguished service in our Church who have become unable to serve due to health and/or age. A quorum for the transaction of business by the deacon body shall consist of the active Deacons present in all announced meetings. Should an unusual situation arise, the Deacons may request from the Church the authority to make modifications to these provisions regarding Deacons.

Section 7. Moderator

The Moderator shall be elected annually. The Moderator shall hold office for one year or until a successor has been duly elected. The Moderator, if re-elected, may serve successive terms in office. The Moderator shall preside over Business Meetings of the Church. In the absence of the Moderator, the Senior Pastor

or the Chairman of Deacons shall preside. In the absence of the above, the Clerk or any other church officer may call the meeting to order for the purpose of electing a Moderator.

Section 8. Clerk

The Clerk shall be elected annually. The Clerk shall hold office for one year or until a successor has been duly elected. The Clerk, if re-elected, may serve successive terms in office. The duties of the Clerk will include keeping an accurate record of all the actions of the Church; keeping on file all communications and written official reports and keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death together with a record of baptism. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the Church and give legal notice of all meetings when such notice is necessary. The Church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and shall be filed in the church office.

Section 9. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected annually. The Treasurer shall hold office for one year or until a successor has been duly elected. The Treasurer, if re-elected, may serve successive terms in office. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, or things of value paid or given to the Church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the Church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of all receipts and disbursements for the preceding period. The Treasurer's report shall be audited periodically by an auditing committee or public accountant. The Treasurer shall be bonded. The Treasurer may be assisted by a financial secretary or business manager in the performance of his/her duties.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the Church, the records shall be delivered by the Treasurer to the Church Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the Church.

Section 10. Trustees

Three Trustees will hold in trust the Church property. The Trustees shall serve on a three-year rotation system with one trustee being elected each year. The Trustee shall hold office until a successor has been duly elected. The Trustees, if re-elected, may serve successive terms in office.

The Trustees will have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the Church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the Trustees to sign legal documents where the signature of Trustees is required. They shall be responsible for the safe keeping of all legal papers of the Church and the insuring and legal protection of all real property. They should be members of sound business judgement.

Article IV. Committees and Ministry Organizations

The Senior Pastor will be advised by the Leadership Council to nominate church officers (Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, and Trustees), the Budget and Finance Committee, and the Margaret Marchman Trustees. To

the extent that certain members of the Leadership Council are serving or might be nominated to serve as a church officer, those members will not participate in the nomination process. The Leadership Council may assist the Pastor with other discretionary committees at his request.

The Senior Pastor shall determine the necessity of all other committees, and he shall organize and direct such committees as deemed appropriate. The Senior Pastor may choose to delegate these duties.

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into classes for all ages for the study of God's Word. In addition to the Sunday School, there shall be Discipleship Groups and Bible Studies. These ministries function to reach people for Christ; to provide in-depth study of God's Word; to disciple new church members; to train church leaders; and, to teach Christian theology and ethics.

The Senior Pastor and staff shall determine the necessity of all ministry organizations and shall organize and direct such organizations as deemed appropriate. The Senior Pastor and staff may choose to delegate these duties.

Article V. Ordinances

Section 1. Baptism

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, and fulfills the requirements of a new member class offered regularly by the Church, shall be received for baptism.

Baptism of believers by immersion in water shall be administered by whomever the Senior Pastor shall designate as an act of worship during any worship service. The Deacons shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church and visiting Christians, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate his second coming.

The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly in the morning worship services, or as otherwise scheduled. The Senior Pastor and Deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper. The Deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparation of the Lord's Supper.

Article VI. The Budget and Finance Committee

Section 1. General

It is understood that membership in this Church involves financial obligation to support the Church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. The Church shall also support special emphasis for

the Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, State Missions, and other special church offerings.

The Budget and Finance Committee shall consist of six members for three-year terms with no prohibition on reelection. The Chairman shall be elected annually by the Committee. The Budget and Finance Committee shall assist the Church staff in whatever way is necessary to conduct an effective church financial program. The Senior Pastor or his designee, Chairman of Deacons, and the Treasurer shall be non-voting ex-officio members of this committee.

All non-designated general funds received through the Sunday School and the church worship services (and by mail or by online payment) shall be handled through the church office of Treasurer and shall be deposited in the Church's general funds bank account, and then be disbursed through the Church budget.

Gifts designated for specific purposes which are not in conflict with the total mission of the Church will be graciously accepted and sacredly applied according to the will of the donor. The Budget and Finance Committee shall have the authority to determine if any designated gifts conflict with the total mission of the Church. Complete financial records pertaining to designated gifts shall be maintained by the Church.

It is the policy of the Church to promote and encourage giving of tithes and offerings through the Church budget. In this way, members support the overall financial program of this Church.

Section 2. Budget

The Budget and Finance Committee shall annually prepare an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed for all church related expenses.

This committee shall submit its report to the Deacons and confer together for approval or amendments, and then to the Church for final adoption.

The committee has the continuing responsibilities of assuring efficient budget administration. Its work includes the formulation and recommendation of policies and procedures for administering church finances, adoption of an effective church finance record system, approval for budget expenditures, approval for church fund raising projects, monthly reviews of budget status, and the initiation of an audit or review of church financial records.

It will be the policy of the Church to operate under a budget system and to control financial obligations and disbursements for all expenditures within the general church fund account. The Budget and Finance Committee shall have authority to adjust the budget as they deem necessary. They shall report such changes to the Church at a regular church conference.

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on October 1 and end on September 30.

Section 3. Receipts and Disbursements

The Church shall keep written records of all receipts and disbursements and shall prepare monthly and annual financial statements for the Church. Also, the Church shall remit promptly all cooperative funds,

designated funds, and special gifts to the proper causes.

It shall be the responsibility of the Budget and Finance Committee to oversee the processes to receive, count, verify and deposit all receipts in a bank account in the name of the Church. They may select other church members to aid them in the counting.

Section 4. Church Salaries and Benefits

The Budget and Finance Committee, under the leadership of its Chairman, shall have the sole authority to determine the Senior Pastor's salary and benefits.

The Senior Pastor shall propose all other staff salaries and benefits and submit a salary package to the Budget and Finance Committee for approval. The Budget and Finance committee shall make its approval decision based on budgetary considerations.

Article VII. Statement of Belief

Section 1. Statement of Final Authority

This Church is a body of baptized believers, which has the Bible as its authority and The 2000 Baptist Faith & Message as its guide for faith and practice. The 2000 Baptist Faith & Message does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source for all that we believe. For purposes of the Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Senior Pastor is the Church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's application.

Section 2. Statement on Sanctity of Human Life

The Church believes in the sanctity of human life. The Church believes that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

Section 3. Statement on Gender, Marriage, and Sexuality

The Church believes that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as either male or female, and that these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God.

The Church believes that God created marriage to be exclusively the union of one man and one woman, and that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that union.

The Church believes the term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one naturally born man and one naturally born woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in the Bible (Genesis 2:18-25).

The Church believes that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a naturally born man and a naturally born woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). The Church believes that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a naturally born man and a naturally born woman.

The Church believes that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, polygamy, or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

The Church believes that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, shall agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly (Matthew 5:16; Philipians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5.22).

Therefore, The Church believes the word "marriage" means only a legal union between one naturally born man and one naturally born woman as husband and wife, and "spouse" refers to a person of the naturally born opposite sex who is husband or wife. Marriages outside of these parameters or in conflict with the above statement on human sexuality will not be performed by Church ministers or on Church property.

The Church believes that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

The Church believes that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with the Bible nor the doctrines of the Church.

Article VIII. Amendment

Changes in this Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any church conference meeting of the Church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of all Voting Members of the Church present at a church conference.

Article IX. Adoption

The foregoing Constitution and Bylaws were adopted by the Church in a specially called business meeting May 15, 2022.