

CONSTITUTION
AND
BY-LAWS
(Revised March 2025)

Sandy Valley Baptist Church

Warner Robins, Georgia

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SANDY VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH OF WARNER ROBINS, GEORGIA

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

For the furtherance and ongoing of God's Kingdom, for the preservation of our faith and to provide for the orderly carrying out of God's mission for Christians united as a church, we establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I. NAME

This body shall be known as the Sandy Valley Baptist Church of Warner Robins, Georgia, located on South Houston Lake Road.

ARTICLE II. ARTICLES OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God and is the basis of our faith. This church accepts *The Baptist Faith and Message* as most recently adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention as an affirmation of our basic Christian beliefs and as a general statement of our faith. However, *The Baptist Faith and Message* does not exhaust the extent of our faith. 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 of all that we believe. For purposes of church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our pastor and church council are the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application. The church follows our Lord Jesus Christ in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

1. The Scriptures

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness. (II Timothy 3: 16)

2. God is Trinity

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. (1 John 5: 7)

God the Father: *But now, O Lord, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.* (Isaiah 64: 8)

God the Son: *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God.* (John 13: 3) *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* (John 1: 1)

God the Holy Spirit: *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.* (John 14: 16-17)

3. Sin

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. (Romans 5: 12)

4. Salvation

That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10: 9-10)

5. Baptism

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 38)

6. The Lord's Supper

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10: 16)

7. Evangelism

Go therefore and make disciples of all the 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 you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

(Matthew 28: 19-20) But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1: 8)

ARTICLE III. ORDINANCES

1. Baptism

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Him as Lord shall be received for baptism.

- a. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- b. Baptism shall be administered by the Pastor or anyone authorized by the church.
- c. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.

2. Lord's Supper

- a. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly.
- b. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the preparation and administration of the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE IV. CHURCH COVENANT

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

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.

Our Vision: To become a Family of God who embraces our community in the love of Jesus.

Our Mission: Sandy Valley exists for the purpose of glorifying God by: Making Disciples, Maturing Believers, and Multiplying Ministries.

Our Core Values:

Acceptance: We accept each other as a unique gift of God.

Compassion: We have compassion for others in a lost world.

Devotion: We are devoted to the Lord Jesus and His Word.

Encouragement: We are encouragers to one another in the faith.

Faithfulness: We are faithful to God and to our church family.

Love: We love others as God loves us.

For the advancement of this church –

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.

As Christian Stewards –

To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expense of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

Alone and at home -

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

Before the world –

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 abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage and the use of illegal drugs and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

Toward one another –

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other 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, to secure it without delay, and to be mindful of the rules of our Savior.

When we move –

We moreover engage that when we move 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.

ARTICLE V. CHARACTER

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers (members) who compose it. This church will be, and is always to be, a sovereign, autonomous Baptist church, self-governing on all matters by a majority of the body of members who compose it and recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist Churches.

ARTICLE VI. DOCTRINE

This church receives the Scriptures (Holy Bible) as its authority of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of the Baptist churches as indicated in the Articles of Faith referred to in Article II.

ARTICLE VII. MARRIAGE

We believe the word “marriage” means only a legal union between one natural-born man and one natural-born woman as husband and wife, and the word “spouse” refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or wife. Marriages outside of these parameters will not be performed by church ministers or on church property.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. GENERAL

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership of the church shall have final authority in all matters of church governance, as set forth and described in the by-laws.

The membership of this Church shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the tenets of the Sandy Valley Baptist Church Constitution and who offer evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are living in accord with their affirmations and this Constitution and By-Laws, and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The membership reserves the executive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

SECTION 2. CANDIDACY (QUALIFICATIONS)

Any person may offer himself/herself as a candidate for membership in this church without regard to race, nationality, former creed or former religion. After counseling by the pastor or his representative, candidates shall be presented at any regular service for membership in one of the following ways:

- a. By profession of faith and baptism according to the policies of this church.
- b. By promise of a letter from another Baptist church.
- c. By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtainable.

Should there be any question that might require prayer, thought or study or if there is any dissent as to any candidate, such question or dissent shall be referred to the Pastor and at his discretion to the Church Staff or deacons for the making of a recommendation within thirty (30) days to the church.

All new members will be expected to participate in an orientation session with the pastor or his representative to include review and affirmation of the Church's Articles of Faith.

SECTION 3. DUTIES

Members are expected to be faithful and obedient in all areas of the Christian life, attend the services of this church, give regularly to its support, and participate in its ministries.

SECTION 4. RIGHTS

Members in good standing as defined in Sections 2 and 3 above may participate in the ministries of the church, vote in church conference, hold office and exercise leadership and service.

SECTION 5. TERMINATION

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) Death
- (2) Granting of letter to another Baptist church
- (3) Termination by action of this church (Matthew 18:15-17)
- (4) Affiliation with a church of another faith or denomination.
- (5) By request of member desiring termination.

All requests for recommendations as to the termination of a member under paragraph (3) shall first be brought to the attention of the Pastor who shall, after consideration of the matter, either himself or his duly appointed representative, confer with the individual subject to said termination. Only after faithful efforts to bring such member to repentance have failed shall the

Pastor recommend to the Church Council that the membership of said person be terminated. Upon a vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Church Council, a recommendation shall be made to the Church to terminate the person's membership in the Church. The member subject to termination will be notified in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the recommendation that his/her membership be terminated. A member cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign membership once the discipline process has begun. Such recommendation will be presented to the church at a church conference. Action to terminate will be taken upon an affirmative vote of the church in conference.

SECTION 6. RESTORATION

Any person whose membership has been terminated may be restored upon evidence of his/her repentance and reformation by recommendation of the Pastor and affirmative vote of the church.

SECTION 7. RECORD OF MEMBERSHIP

The church office manager, at the direction of the Church Clerk, shall keep an accurate roll of all members, and insofar as possible, an up-to-date record of addresses.

ARTICLE II. CHURCH ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1. GENERAL

The Church is both a spiritual body and a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Georgia. The Church is subject to the authority of Scripture in all matters and subject to the rules of duly constituted public authority (Romans 13:1-7). The church organization is to provide the mechanism for the orderly activity of the church body.

SECTION 2. CHURCH CONFERENCES

The spiritual Church shall meet in regular worship services each Sunday morning and evening and for midweek prayer service. Additionally, the Church may meet at such other dates and times as may be deemed appropriate by the Pastor for purpose of worship, edification and proclamation.

The corporate Church shall meet in regularly scheduled or duly called church conferences for the purpose of conducting the business of the Church.

The Pastor shall preside as moderator at the church conference except in matters in which he is personally involved. In this case or in his absence, the Associate Pastor shall preside. In the event of the absence of both the Pastor and Associate Pastor, another paid church staff member or lay person selected by the Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Church Council shall preside. Robert's Rules of Order, Revised is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all church conferences. The church shall elect a parliamentarian to interpret parliamentary procedures. The moderator may bring such matters before the conference as he determines at his sole discretion to be appropriate. At least annually the following matters shall be brought before the church in conference:

- a. A slate of messengers to represent the body before local, state, and national conventions of the Southern Baptist denomination.
- b. An annual church budget or any proposed change to the church's current budget.
- c. An annual slate of nominees to fill church volunteer positions.
- d. Any proposed change to the Church Constitution and By-Laws.
- e. Membership admissions and terminations

Any matter presented to the Church in conference for action shall require a majority vote of those in attendance. Members in attendance at a duly called or regular meeting of the Church in conference shall be deemed to constitute a legal quorum.

SECTION 3. DEACONS

1. Functional Role: Our Deacon Ministry is designed to assist the staff in ministering to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of our people. We choose to do this through eight ministry teams:

- (1) Homebound Ministry Team
- (2) Hospital Visitation Ministry Team
- (3) Bereavement Ministry Team
- (4) New Member Ministry Team
- (5) Prayer Ministry Team
- (6) Hospitality Ministry Team
- (7) Inactive Member Ministry Team
- (8) Small Jobs Ministry Team

2. General Qualifications: Nominees must be at least eighteen (18) years old and a member of this church for a period of one year, of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. The history and principles of the deacon ministry, found in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3, will be used in the screening process.

3. Deacon Nominating Committee: A Deacon Nominating Committee, as outlined in the Volunteer Positions Handbook, will be responsible for the screening and selection of deacons.

SECTION 4. CHURCH OFFICERS (Paid Positions)

1. Church Staff

This church shall call or employ such paid staff members as the church shall need. All staff members other than the Pastor shall be recommended to the church by the Personnel Committee and employed by church action.

All Church employees shall be provided a copy of bylaws and personnel policies to review and acknowledge that they agree with the Church's statement of Faith and understand the by-laws and personnel policies of the Church prior to their being hired.

All employment positions, specifically including ministerial staff, but not limited thereto, must be filled by only Christians because each position requires the ability to spiritually receive the truths of God's Word, to spiritually discern God's will and the ability to serve the Church in a spiritual manner trying to help the Church fulfill its ministry for the cause of Christ. Each position requires spiritual Christian service and ministry, such as praying for the Church, its leaders, members, and ministries; actively participating in spiritual leadership by prayerfully voting in membership matters; and actively participating in Bible study and worship. As such, all employees acknowledge that they are in a spiritual ministerial relationship with the Church.

2. Other Paid Staff May Include the Following Positions:

- a. Associate Pastor
- b. Director of Outreach
- c. Director of Youth Ministries
- d. Director of Music Ministries
- e. Office Manager
- f. Treasurer
- g. Pianist
- h. Audiovisual Team Leader
- i. Nursery Workers

3. Staff Positions Handbook

Job descriptions of all church staff members shall be on file in the Staff Positions Handbook.

SECTION 5. GENERAL OFFICERS

General Officers of the Church are:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| a. Assistant Treasurer | d. Counters |
| b. Church Clerk | e. Insurance Administrator |
| c. Constitution and By-Laws Administrator | f. Parliamentarian |
| | g. Trustees |

The Church shall elect annually the General Officer positions from nominations brought by the Nominating Committee.

Duties of each position are found in the Volunteer Positions Handbook.

SECTION 6. CHURCH COMMITTEES

1. Committees of the Church are:

- a. Baptismal
- b. Benevolence
- c. Bereavement
- d. Budget & Finance
- e. Building
- f. Deacon Nominating (*ad hoc*).
- g. Directory (*ad hoc*)
- h. Flower
- i. Homecoming (*ad hoc*)
- j. Hostess
- k. Long-Range Planning (*ad hoc*)
 - l. Lord's Supper
- m. Music
- n. Nominating
- o. Nursery
- p. Pastor Search (*ad hoc*)
- q. Personnel
- r. Property & Grounds
- s. Technology
- t. Transportation

2. General

- a. All church committee members shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Church.
- b. If the chairman of a committee does not succeed himself/herself, it is recommended that the new chairman be selected from past active committee members to give each committee some stability in purpose and leadership.
- c. Sub-committees operating under a duly elected committee need not be brought before the church for election.
- d. Other committees may be named by the church as needed.
- e. Duties and responsibilities of each committee may be found in the Volunteer Positions Handbook.

SECTION 7. CHURCH COUNCIL

1. Duties and Responsibilities

The Church Council shall:

- a. Recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals
- b. Review and coordinate ministry plans recommended by the church officers, organizations, and committees
- c. Recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar times, and other resources according to the ministry priorities
- d. Evaluate ministry achievements in terms of church goals and objectives

2. Composition

- a. The Pastor shall be chairman of the Church Council.
- b. Unless otherwise determined by vote of the Church, regular members shall be the Pastor, Church Staff, Chairman of the Deacons, and leaders of all Church Ministries and Emphasis Ministries.
- c. Committee chairmen and church elected officers not listed above may serve as

ex-officio members.

3. General

- a. The Council shall meet annually or on the call of the Pastor at any time deemed necessary.
- b. All matters agreed upon by the Council which call for action not already provided for shall be referred to the Church for approval or disapproval.

SECTION 8. BUDGET AND FINANCE

1. Budget and Finance Committee

The primary function of the Budget and Finance Committee is to continuously review the financial affairs of the Church to provide a level of stewardship accountability for the Church staff to the Church membership. This committee meets as needed (or as required by its Chairman) to review the financial statements prepared by the Church Staff, to examine prior approved disbursements for propriety, to consider the accounting and financial systems of the Church, to measure actual financial operations to budgeted amounts, and to advise the Pastor of any action needed by the body in the financial area. The Finance Committee meets annually to develop a proposed budget for the next Church fiscal year. Utilizing Church Staff input and through interviews of Church Staff submitting budget requests and recommendations of the Personnel Committee, the Finance Committee formulates a proposed budget, which is then presented to the Church in conference for church membership approval. The Finance Committee is to submit desired revisions in the current budget to the Church in conference as deemed appropriate by the committee and with approval of the Pastor. The Treasurer is an ex-officio member, without vote, of the Finance Committee.

2. Handling of Monies

The church will receive monies through regular tithes and offerings or as follows:

- a. Fund raising by organizations is permitted when authorized by the church.
- b. Monies held in accounts not in present use will be placed in an interest drawing account.
- c. The church recognizes that planning for future needs is a practice of good stewardship and has established designated funds as ongoing funds. Should at any time in the future the church vote to close a designated fund, all money in the fund at that time will go in the general budget of the church.
- d. Surplus property shall be disposed of through donations or sold at fair market value, after approval by the church. This process will be handled by the Church's Property and Grounds Committee.
- e. All funds shall pass through the hands of the church counters with the exception of class love offerings and flower funds.
- f. All information relative to individual tithes and offerings shall be kept confidential.

ARTICLE III. PASTOR

SECTION 1. PASTOR

The Pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament church. By virtue of his calling and office, the Pastor is the spiritual leader of the Church. He shall be elected for an indefinite period of time and shall serve until he terminates his position with the Church by a notice of thirty days or the Church may terminate his position by the same notice.

The Pastor shall serve as the preacher and senior Bible teacher by virtue of his calling. The Pastor shall oversee the total ministry of the church.

When possible, the Pastor will provide for pulpit supply. In case of his inability or temporary absence, another church staff member or lay person, with the approval of Church Council, will assume this responsibility.

In the event of a vacancy in the position of Pastor, a pastor and/or interim pastor shall be chosen and called by a Pastor Search Committee. The Committee shall give at least one (1) week notice before bringing their recommendation to preach. There shall be a called church conference for the candidate's approval or disapproval the following Sunday.

ARTICLE IV. CHURCH MINISTRIES

The ministries of the Church are to be consistent with the Church Covenant and Articles of Faith. They are to be under the supervision of the Pastor or his designated Church Staff member. In order for a ministry to be considered as a ministry of the Church it must be under the Scriptural authority of the Church so as to insure appropriate accountability, integrity, and management of such ministries.

1. Ministries

- a. Children
- b. Discipleship Training
- c. Men's Ministries
- d. Music
- e. Sunday School
- f. Youth
- g. Women's Missionary Union (WMU)

2. Emphasis Ministries

- a. Media Library
- b. Photographer
- c. Recreation
- d. Special Events
- e. Prayer Coordinator
- f. Ushers

3. Ministries Leadership

All ministry leaders shall be elected by the church annually from nominations brought by the Nominating Committee.

Duties/responsibilities of each ministry are found in the Volunteer Positions Handbook.

ARTICLE V. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

It shall be the practice of this Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, other members of the Church Staff, and Deacons are available for counsel and guidance.

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5: 6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Timothy 5: 20), and to promote 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 the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Pastor and Church Staff and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18: 15-17, 1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2: 7-8, Galatians 6: 1, 2 Thessalonians 3: 6, Titus 3: 10-11, and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Pastor or Church 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.

Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion and dismissal from the fellowship of this church (See Article I, Section 5). An individual may be disciplined by the Pastor short of dismissal from the fellowship, as he deems appropriate for the specific circumstances (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).

The members of this church further knowingly and voluntarily agree that a member cannot voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership in the midst of the discipline process, and may only voluntarily withdraw or resign his or her membership if he or she is not the subject of a discipline proceeding at the time.

ARTICLE VI. CHILD PROTECTION

The church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our ministries and activities. Our goal is to protect the children of the church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations. Toward that goal, policies and procedures are outlined in the **Children's Ministries Policies and Procedures Handbook**.

ARTICLE VII. MARRIAGE

Our statement of faith, *the Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, expresses this church's fundamental Biblical conviction that Christian marriage is defined as "the uniting of one natural-born man and one natural-born woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race". (Section 18 of Baptist Faith and Message 2000) *Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*

A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as a legitimate marriage by the church only to the extent that it is consistent with the definition of "marriage" as found in these by-laws.

We believe that Scripture teaches that sexual intimacy should only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other and that a man and woman should not engage in intimate sexual activity outside of marriage. We believe that Scripture also teaches that any form of sexual relations outside of marriage, including but not limited to, homosexuality, 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. Such sinful patterns, if not repented, will be a barrier to membership, employment, and leadership in this body of believers.

Genesis 2: 24; Genesis 19: 5, 13; Genesis 26: 8-9; Leviticus 18: 1-30; Romans 1: 26-29; 1 Corinthians 5: 1; 1 Thessalonians 4: 1-8; Hebrews 13: 4.

We believe that wedding ceremonies on church property are spiritual acts of worship of the God who created this divine institution. As such, weddings on church property shall be officiated by one or more ordained ministers of the Gospel. Clergy officiating marriage ceremonies on church premises, whether or not employed by the church, shall affirm their agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith. Marriage ceremonies will only be conducted for present and former church members who have affirmed their agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

We believe 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, should abide by and agree to the Church definition of "marriage" and conduct themselves accordingly.

The church may decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not biblically and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determinations may be made by the pastor or church council subject to the direction of the church.

No minister or employee of the Church shall officiate at any marriage ceremony at this church or any other location unless such marriage is consistent with the definition of "marriage" found in these by-laws.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We believe that Scripture requires that every person should be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL

SECTION 1. LICENSING AND ORDINATION

Any person recommended by the Pastor, having given evidence that he is called to the work of the ministry, may be licensed to preach. The Pastor shall possess the sole right to convene an Ordination Council to examine the qualifications of a candidate and, in turn, advise the Church as to the propriety of ordination. The final action to ordain such minister shall rest with the Church upon recommendation of the Pastor.

SECTION 2. MEDIATION

Members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion (1 Corinthians 6:1-7).

The mediation will be governed by the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC *Rules*), which we agree to follow, unless modified as stipulated by the parties. (The ICC *Rules* can be accessed at <http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.nu-IIWL7MOJtE/b.5335917/k.D8A2/Rules of Procedure.htm>). In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC *Rules*, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of this dispute through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement is agreed upon, the conciliation may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communications exchanged in the mediation process will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

SECTION 3. ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

This Constitution and the Bylaws shall be considered adopted and will become effective the 12th day of March 2025 upon affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present at a church conference. The adoption shall affect a repeal of all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith.

SECTION 4. FISCAL YEAR

The Church hereby adopts September through August as its fiscal year.

SECTION 5. AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws will be presented to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee for consideration. This committee shall present any changes in writing to the church at least one week prior to a regular or called conference at which a vote on the changes will be taken. The Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a two-third (2/3) majority vote of those members present and voting.

A copy of this Constitution and Bylaws shall, at all times, be kept by the Church Clerk along with amendments to or revisions thereof. Up-to-date copies shall also be maintained in the church office and made available to any church member upon request.