# Cornerstone Baptist Church

Of Kearney-Lawson Inc.

Current as of July 10, 2024

## Constitution of Cornerstone Baptist Church of Kearney-Lawson Inc.

### Preamble

We, the members of Cornerstone Baptist Church of Kearney-Lawson Inc., in order to work for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ Jesus the Lord, do hereby assemble ourselves together as a local Body of Christ under the authority of Jesus Christ the Lord and the Holy Scriptures and adopt as our Constitution the following articles.

### Article I Name

The name of this organization shall be **Cornerstone Baptist Church of Kearney-Lawson Inc**.

### Article II Purpose of Cornerstone Baptist

The purpose of Cornerstone Baptist Church shall be the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ Jesus and His Gospel by following the teachings and practices of God's Holy Word in worship, proclamation of the Gospel, discipleship, benevolent work, missions, and ministry.

### Article III Church Government

1. Cornerstone Baptist is an autonomous body, not subject to the direction or control of any other ecclesiastical body.
2. The offices of Cornerstone Baptist shall be known as the Leadership Council, made up of the Elder Team and Deacons. The purpose of the Leadership Council of Cornerstone Baptist is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.
3. The leadership of Cornerstone Baptist shall be vested in the Elder Team who is responsible for the governing of the Church, teaching the Word of God, and tending to the flock of God in this Church. The pastor is considered an elder. The elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.
4. Deacons shall assist the Elder Team by performing services of advice, administration, and implementation.
5. The Leadership Council shall have general supervision of the affairs of the church between business meetings. The Leadership Council shall report all actions to the church, gaining approval as dictated by the Constitution.
6. All Leadership Council actions shall not conflict with the provisions of this constitution, the by-laws of Cornerstone Baptist, Statements of Faith, and most importantly God's Holy Word.
7. Leadership Council will meet regularly as directed by the pastor or by a written request by the majority of the Elder Team.
8. The pastor will lead all Leadership Council meetings.
9. If pastor is unavailable then a designated elder will moderate.
10. An elder appointed by the Elder Team shall serve as secretary.

11. Leadership Council will go no longer than 60 days between meetings.
12. Meetings will be run according to stated Constitution and By-Laws.

Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the Congregation of Cornerstone Baptist is the final authority within this local body. This authority will be vested in the elders of Cornerstone Baptist who are to govern the Body of Christ according to God's Word. However, the vote of the membership of Cornerstone Baptist at properly called meetings, stated by the By-Laws, shall be required **to affect the following actions**:

1. Accept members into the Church or drop members from the church roll per Membership By-Law.
2. Elect Deacons as presented by the elders.
3. Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline of elders and deacons by removing them from leadership positions as stated in by-laws.
4. Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget or Elder Team approval, and approve any transactions regarding real property.
5. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this church.
6. Approve the call, job description, and initial salary of Vocational/Bi-Vocational pastors, ministers, and other church employees.

## Article IV Denominational Cooperation

Cornerstone Baptist shall voluntarily cooperate with the Missouri Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. This cooperation does not grant to any of the aforementioned entities any authority over this church, nor in any way alter or lessen the autonomy and independence of this church.

## Article V Cornerstone Baptist Church Covenant

1. Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord; 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. Our passion…our desire is to advance a passion to magnify Christ Jesus in **all** that we do to the praise and honor of His glory.
3. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of Cornerstone Baptist 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 those in prison. We will also strive to come together on each Lord's Day when possible and join together at other times to minister to brothers and sisters in Christ, to those who are lost, and to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our surrounding area and beyond.
4. We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; 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.

5. 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.
6. 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 VI Statement of Faith and Message

Cornerstone Baptist Church recognizes God's Holy Word as revealed in the Holy Bible as the sole authority in matters of faith and practice; however, in order to set forth certain principles which persons who are Baptists generally agree on, we do hereby incorporate, by reference, and adopt as the Statement of Faith and Message of the Cornerstone Baptist Church, the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention June 14, 2000, and the Cornerstone Baptist Statement of Faith which further clarifies the beliefs of Cornerstone Baptist Church.

## Article VII Membership

The membership of Cornerstone Baptist shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine, and practices of Cornerstone Baptist per Cornerstone Baptist's Statement of Faith, who have been baptized in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit by immersion, and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of Cornerstone Baptist.

## Article VIII Meetings

A. Cornerstone Baptist Church shall have an annual business meeting every second Sunday of January. Date may be changed by Elder Team if two weeks previous notice is given from the pulpit on Sunday morning.
B. Cornerstone Baptist Church shall have quarterly business meetings on the following dates: the second Tuesday of April, July, and October. Date may be changed by the Elder Team if two weeks previous notice is given from the pulpit on Sunday Morning.
C. Specially called business meetings may be called by the Elder Team or by written request by 20% of the church body. If such meeting is called, all members must be notified or attempted to be notified of meeting. Announcement of said meeting must take place three days prior to said meeting. (Example: if said meeting is to be scheduled for Wednesday, then the announcement of the meeting must take place on Sunday.)
D. The Church may have a business meeting, without prior call, at any worship service for the sole purpose of receiving members into the Church as based upon the Constitution and By-Laws of Cornerstone Baptist.
E. All business meetings and Leadership Council meetings shall be moderated by the pastor. If pastor is unavailable then an elder chosen by the Elder Team will preside.

## Article IX Team Ministries

A. Cornerstone Baptist shall be structured through Team Ministries. Team Ministries shall consist of members of the Church based on spiritual gifts. Deacons will oversee each specific Team Ministry. Elders will oversee and have authority of the Team Ministries.
B. Team Ministries will be put in place as the Elder Team so deem necessary.

C. Other ministries may be practiced by Cornerstone Baptist and not fall underneath the specific Team Ministry organization. These ministries must have approval of the Elder Team as to protect the flock.
D. Special Ministry Teams may need to be established for various reasons (i.e. pastor search committee, building committee, etc.) These ministries will be established by the Elder Team and will be headed up by an elder or deacon.
E. Team Ministries will be on a one-year basis and will be voted on each and every year.
F. Members of Cornerstone Baptist will be encouraged to sign up for at least two Team Ministries based upon what they believe to be their spiritual gift(s). The Elder Team will then place those who signed up for a particular Team Ministry into at least one of those requested ministries.

**Articles X Parliamentary Authority**

The pastor will conduct and moderate all business meetings and Leadership Council meetings. If pastor is unable to conduct and moderate a said meeting, then an elder chosen by the Elder Team will become the moderator.

**Article XI**

The Leadership Council shall act as the Board of Directors and shall have general supervision of the affairs of the church between its business meetings. The Leadership Council shall be subject to the authority of the church as mandated by this Constitution. The Leadership Council will report all business actions it takes to the church.

**Article XII Dissolution of Church and Disposition of Property**

**Section 1:** In the event of the dissolution of the Cornerstone Baptist Church of Kearney-Lawson Inc., all of the property of Cornerstone Baptist Church, real, personal, and mixed of whatsoever kind and wheresoever located shall be transferred to First Baptist Kearney, Missouri.

**Section 2:** Dissolution of the church shall occur if the church, by official action, votes to dissolve as a church, or upon termination of regular worship services for more than twelve consecutive Sundays. Upon such action the Leadership Council is authorized to sign all necessary documents to convey the property as herein provided.

**Article XIII Amendment of the Constitution**

**Section 1:** This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended, except for Article XII and Article XIII. Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any regularly scheduled business meeting, but shall not be acted on until the following business meeting or annual business meeting. Also, two weeks before vote for proposed amendment, an announcement of said vote on proposed amendment must be made. An attempt to reach all members at least two weeks before proposed amendment vote by phone, mail, or email is to be done between two and four weeks of said vote. At said meeting a two-thirds majority vote will be needed to secure proposed amendment. Also, at least 10% of the membership must be present.

**Section 2:** Article XII and XIII can only be amended by a three-fourths vote of the resident membership at a special business meeting called for the purpose of amending Article XII and/or Article XIII, provided, however, that the proposed amendment must be submitted in writing at a regular business meeting not less than two months prior to the calling of the special business meeting to consider the amendment; and provided further that a written notice, containing a copy of the proposed amendment shall be mailed to all resident members at least thirty days prior to the special business meeting; and provided further that a copy of the proposed amendment shall be posted on church bulletin boards for at least thirty days prior to the special business meeting; and provided further that announcement of the special business meeting shall be made at each worship service for four weeks prior to the special business meeting.

## The Constitutional By-Laws of Cornerstone Baptist Church

**Section I** **Membership**

### Sub Section One Procedure to Become a Member

To become a member of Cornerstone Baptist the following must take place before admission as a member can take place:

A. Any person seeking membership at Cornerstone Baptist must approach a member of the Leadership Council and request a Petition for Membership form. Form must be completely filled out and returned to a member of the Leadership Council.
B. The Petition for Membership will then be reviewed by the Elder Team, and at least two elders will meet with person seeking membership.
C. Prospective member must be scripturally baptized and show evidence of leading a life characterized by being regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
D. After said meeting, elders will meet back together and discuss membership to determine if the membership process should continue.
E. Prospective member will also complete a required New Members class as led by a select number of the Elder Team. Participation in New Members' Class will precede meeting with elders as noted in B.
F. To become a member of Cornerstone Baptist, prospective member must agree with, strive to practice, and sign the Cornerstone Baptist Membership Agreement.
G. After said class has been completed by prospective member then the Elder Team will present the prospective member before the church. If the congregation affirms said prospect as a member and said prospective member makes a public profession of faith his/her faith then such person shall become a member of Cornerstone Baptist Church.

### Sub Section Two Dismissal of Members

Persons shall be removed as members of this church in the following cases:

A. Death
B. Member informs Elder Team of his/her desire to withdraw membership from Cornerstone Baptist.
C. Member has not participated in worship, discipleship, financially contributed to the support of Cornerstone Baptist, and/or other ministry activities for a period of two months or longer. (see sub-section four – Non-Participatory Members)
D. Due to sin in a member's life and the Church has gone through Matthew 18:15-17; Hebrews 12:14-16; Galatians 6:1-2; First Thessalonians 5:14; Proverbs 27:5; Second Corinthians 7:9-11; and because said member has not repented of sin, continues to practice said sin, and member has been brought before the church and refuses even to hear the church then said member may be dismissed by a closed ballot majority vote of the Church. Matthew 18:17; Ephesians 5:11; First Corinthians 5:1-2, 5-7, 11-13; Titus 3:10-11; 2 John 9-11.
E. All efforts will be exhausted by the Elder Team and the Church to restore fallen Brothers and Sisters in Christ in love. THAT MUST BE OUR NUMBER ONE GOAL IN CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

### Sub Section Three Voting Rights of Members

All members shall have full voting rights on all motions, recommendations, resolutions, or other matters that come before the church in regular, annual, or special business meetings except:

A. Members placed on the non-participatory list as directed by these By-Laws.
B. Members under the age of 18 years of age.

### Sub Section Four Non-Participatory Members

A non-participatory member is a member who is considered a member in good standing but due to reasons deemed acceptable to the Elder Team, he/she cannot physically participate in worship, discipleship, ministry at Cornerstone Baptist Church. Reasons acceptable may be but not limited to: military service, missionary work, work related reasons, illness, injury, family issues, etc.

## Section II Church Discipline

The discipline of the members shall be a responsibility of the Elder Team under the guidelines of God's Word and as found in the book "Our Church on Solid Ground". The congregation shall also play its part in church discipline as based on Matthew 18.

## Section III Adopted Documents To Be Used For Church Polity

The following are documents that Cornerstone Baptist will use to guide in various issues of church polity:

A. 2000 Baptist Faith and Message (if update of Baptist Faith and Message should occur then said update can be adopted by Elder Team w/o following Amend. XII & XIII).
B. Cornerstone Baptist Statement of Faith
C. Cornerstone Baptist Membership Agreement.
D. Cornerstone Baptist Church Covenant.
E. Cornerstone Baptist Church Manual. (Can be found in church app and website)
F. *Our Church On Solid Ground* by Jim Elliff and Daryl Wingerd, (Copyright 2005 Christ Fellowship of Kansas City).

## Section IV Leadership

### Sub Section One Appointment of Elders

**1. Initiation of the Appointment Process**

As the needs arise, the elders of Cornerstone Baptist will initiate the process of identifying and examining a potential elder. A man will be considered for appointment if:

- he appears to be biblically qualified
- he appears to be doctrinally and philosophically compatible with the elder team
- it appears to be God's will to initiate the examination process
- he is a member of Cornerstone Baptist Church of Kearney-Lawson.
- he is in agreement with and holds to the CBC Statement of Faith, CBC Constitution, and CBC Position Statements.

**2. Input from the Church**

The elders will initiate a written request to the members of Cornerstone Baptist who know the man well, asking them to consider his qualifications. **This letter will describe the biblical qualifications for eldership along with the duties which an elder must be able and willing to perform (see Cornerstone Baptist Church Manual).**

Each member will be asked to consider the candidate in light of the biblical standard, and to indicate with their signature that they are aware of no biblical disqualification. If any member has concerns or objections, he or she should not sign the letter, but rather return it indicating the desire to speak with an elder. If a disqualifying condition is verified, the man will not be considered further.

**3. Examination of the Elder Candidate**

The elders of the church will follow First Timothy chapter three and Titus chapter one as the guidelines to see if prospective elder meets scriptural guidelines of being an elder. The elders will examine the candidate (and his family) through personal interviews and other means. The examination will be thorough, including scrutiny of the candidate's moral qualifications, his understanding and defense of sound doctrinal positions, his ability to teach, his philosophical compatibility with the elder team, his work ethic, his motives for desiring eldership, and his affection and concern for those who would be under his care. The examination process may include requests for written or recorded responses in some areas (i.e. clarification of doctrinal positions).

**4. Confirmation from the Church**

When the elders are in unanimous agreement that the candidate is qualified and that he should be appointed as an elder, they will seek confirmation of their decision from the church, realizing that they are not infallible. At a church gathering, all members present will be asked to confirm, on a response form, their agreement with the elders' decision. Any members who indicate that they have remaining concerns will be asked to relate them to the elders in private. Even at this point, if any true disqualification is discovered, the appointment process will be stopped.

**5. Appointment**

While input from members and the confirmation from the church will be seriously considered, elder appointment is not a democratic process but rather an elder responsibility. Everything carefully considered, the elder team will make the final decision whether or not to appoint the man, knowing that an elder who does not have the approbation of the church will not be an effective leader.

Formal appointment will take place publicly. The elder team will lay hands on the new elder in the presence of the church, signifying their unanimous approval as well as their confidence that Christ, the Head of the church, is calling him into service as an elder. The elder team will pray for the new elder and for the edification of the church through his leadership. There will be no term limits for elders.

**Sub Section Two Duties of Elders and Other Issues**

The qualifications and duties of elders are stated in the Cornerstone Baptist Elder Qualifications and Duties section of the Cornerstone Baptist Church Manual.

**Sub Section Three Elder Terms and Removal**

The position of elder shall be ongoing as long as: **a)** the elder(s) is affirmed by the Church and, **b)** said elder(s) desires to hold such position. These positions shall be affirmed annually, by a closed ballot, majority vote by the church. If the congregation fails to reaffirm an elder, then reasons need to be presented to the Elder Team, except for the elder who is not being reaffirmed by the congregation (this elder will be on non-active status until matter(s) are fully investigated). The Elder Team will investigate reasons for the lack of affirmation and then report back to the congregation after a reasonable amount of time. The Elder Team will give their recommendation on whether or not said elder should continue in said leadership role. After the Elder Team has made their statement, then the congregation, after call of a special business meeting, as described in Article VIII, item C of Constitution, shall vote to affirm or dismiss said elder. The final decision will be made by the Elder Team. The procedures to remove an elder can be instituted at any time the Elder Team deems necessary.

An elder may wish to take a sabbatical for a particular length of time. In this case the elder will be placed on non-active status. If the elder wishes to come back as an active elder, he must go before the Elder Team. If the Elder Team deems him ready for service, then said elder will go before the Church for affirmation, and then the Elder Team will make final decision.

For further guidelines in the removal of an elder, see the Cornerstone Baptist Church Manual.

**Sub Section Four Appointment and Removal of Deacons**

- The number of and their tasks will be determined by the Elder Team.
- Names for prospective deacons can be generated by the Leadership Council and/or the congregation.
- Names will be presented at either a regular business meeting or a specially called business meeting.
- The congregation will vote to affirm all deacon candidates. The Church will choose who will be deacons.
- Deacons will be assigned to serve under an elder by the Elder Team.

The position of deacons shall be ongoing as long as: a) the deacon(s) is affirmed by the Church and, b) said deacon(s) desires to hold such position. These positions shall be affirmed annually, by a closed ballot, majority vote by the church. If the congregation fails to reaffirm a deacon (per biblical commands, precepts, and principles), then reasons need to be presented to the Elder Team. The Elder Team will investigate reasons for the lack of affirmation and then report back to the congregation after a reasonable amount of time. The Elder Team will give their recommendation on whether or not said deacon should continue in said leadership role. After the Elder Team has made their statement, then the congregation, after call of a special business meeting, as described in Article VIII, item C of Constitution, shall vote to affirm or dismiss said deacon. The final decision will be made by the Elder Team. The procedures to remove a deacon can be instituted at any time the Elder Team deems necessary.

A deacon may wish to take a sabbatical for a particular length of time. In this case the deacon will be placed on non-active status. If the deacon wishes to come back as an active deacon, he must go before the Elder Team. If the Elder Team deems him ready for service, then said deacon will go before the Church for affirmation, and then the Elder Team will make final decision.

The Elder Team, using much of the same guidelines as that of Removing an Elder, can remove deacons from their position.

## Section V Pastor

The pastor shall be considered an elder of the church and fall under the same guidelines as the elders.

The pastor will moderate all business and Leadership Council meetings unless unavailable at which time the elder designated by the elder team will moderate.

If a vacancy for the pastor position occurs then the Leadership Council will begin the search for a new pastor. The procedure for calling a pastor is the same for the calling of an elder as is the termination of a pastor.

## Section VI Church Year and Quorum

The Cornerstone Baptist Church year shall run from January 1st through December 31st.

The quorum for regular, annual, or special business meetings shall be those members of Cornerstone Baptist in attendance at such meeting. See Section One Sub-section 3 concerning voting.

## Section VII Financial Issues

### Sub Section One Financial Oversight

Financial planning will be done by the Finance Team Ministry under the direction of the Leadership Council.

The Finance Team will be responsible for preparing the annual church budget, keeping accurate financial records, and providing monthly financial reports to the Leadership Council and congregation.

The elder overseeing the Financial Team Ministry along with deacon over said ministry, and those designated on the Finance Team Ministry are the only church officers who have the authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finance. This includes the writing of checks from the Cornerstone Baptist Church bank account.

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Finance Team Ministry according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Finance Team Ministry shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of Cornerstone Baptist as detailed in the budgets or other authorized designations.

All expenses that are not listed in the annual church budget that exceed $6,000 must be approved by a majority vote of the congregation at a regularly scheduled business meeting, annual business meeting, or a specially called business meeting. Any expense not listed in the annual church budget that exceeds $500 and is less than $6000.01 must be approved by the Elder Team.

The Finance Team will be responsible for handling all accounting and tax related items (i.e. W-2 forms, annual financial summary, etc.)

### Sub Section Two 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 by the Leadership Council and approved by the congregation.

### Sub Section Three Contributions

It is understood that membership at Cornerstone Baptist involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving.

Special offerings may be sought by the Church with approval of the Leadership Council. Also, special love offerings (gifts or monetary gifts) will be accepted with the understanding that all monetary gifts will go into the general fund of the church.

## Section VIII Church Employees

In addition to vocational or bi-vocational pastors and ministers, the Church may employ additional personnel (this does not include sub-contracting out work). The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting, regularly scheduled business meeting, or annual business meeting. The Leadership Team shall be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring of all personnel and church staff. All employees and said hiring practices by CBC and Leadership Team will be in agreement with each of the following: the CBC Constitution, CBC Statement of Faith, CBC Position Statements, and other CBC teachings.

## **Section IX** Marriage

Requirements for those who may be married at CBC are as follows:

- Must meet for a minimum of 4 hours with pastor for marriage counseling.
- If pastor deems more sessions are necessary then couple WILL meet with pastor the number of times he deems necessary.
- CBC recognizes that marriage per the Word of God is between one man and one woman. We believe that to go outside the bounds set forth by the Holy Spirit in His Word is first and foremost a sin and shows a lack of love to God. We also believe such actions show a lack of love for those seeking to violate God's Word because they are sinning against God and it is our desire to keep all people from falling into sin.
- No marriage will be performed that violates in any way God's Word and the CBC Statement of Faith.
- The Pastor and Elders will have final say in who may be married at CBC as long as said marriage meets the preceding requirements.