

# First Baptist Church of Rockville, Maryland

## Constitution and Bylaws

The First Baptist Church of Rockville, Maryland (“FBCR” or “Church”) has two controlling documents. The primary controlling document is the Bible – the Word of God. The church is God’s mystery revealed by Jesus Christ and directed by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we will administer FBCR based on God’s Word and follow precisely its directives. This Constitution and Bylaws is our secondary controlling document and is divided into two parts, the Constitution that details our fundamental beliefs and purpose, and the Bylaws that specify how FBCR will carry out its God-given purpose.

### I. CHURCH CONSTITUTION

**Church Covenant:** Having received Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, we most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. We accept the Statement of Beliefs in this Constitution and commit ourselves to God and to our fellow Members to direct our lives in accordance with the following four precepts:

#### 1. TO SERVE THE MINISTRY OF OUR CHURCH

- . . . By discovering our gifts and talents
- . . . By being disciplined to serve
- . . . By developing a servant’s heart and participating in ministry

*“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”* 1 Peter 4:10; *“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up...”* Ephesians 4:11-12; *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* Mark 10:45

#### 2. TO SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OUR CHURCH

- . . . By praying for its growth both spiritual and physical
- . . . By inviting the unchurched to attend
- . . . By warmly welcoming and befriending those who visit

*“We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.”* 1 Thessalonians 1:2; *“Pray without ceasing.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:17; *“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house may be full.’”* Luke 14:23; *“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.”* Romans 15:7

#### 3. TO PROTECT THE UNITY OF OUR CHURCH

- . . . By acting in love toward other Members
- . . . By encouraging each other in word and deed and refraining from unwholesome talk
- . . . By following the Church leaders as they follow Christ

*“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Romans 15:5; *“...love one another deeply, from the heart.”* 1 Peter 1:22; *“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up...”* Ephesians 4:29; *“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”* Hebrews 13:17

#### 4. TO SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF OUR CHURCH

- . . . By attending faithfully
- . . . By living a godly life
- . . . By giving regularly

*"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:25; "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Corinthians 7:1; "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income..." 1 Corinthians 16:2; "A tithe of everything from the land...belongs to the LORD." Leviticus 27:30*

#### **Article I - Name**

This congregation shall be known as the First Baptist Church of Rockville, Maryland.

#### **Article II - Purpose**

This congregation is established to encourage God's people to be *"complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:17). A thoroughly equipped congregation:

- Loves God with all its heart – WORSHIP (Matthew 4:10)
- Loves its neighbors as itself – MINISTRY/SERVICE (John 13:35)
- Goes and makes disciples – EVANGELISM (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Teaches them all things – DISCIPLESHIP (Hebrews 6:1)
- Lives in unity and love – FELLOWSHIP (Acts 2:44-47)

#### **Article III - Statement of Basic Beliefs**

**1. Our Belief in God:** We believe there is one living and true God, the self-existent, sovereign, transcendent, perfect, infinite and eternal Creator of the universe. He is revealed in the unity of the Godhead as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, each having a distinct ministry in relation to His creation and His people. **Psalm 90:2; Genesis 1:1, 26- 27; Isaiah 42:5, 46:9; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Job 38:4-7**

- A. God the Father is the Supreme Ruler of the universe. He providentially directs the affairs of history according to the purposes of His grace. **Isaiah 45:18; Romans 9:14-21, 11:36; Ephesians 1:4, 6, 11, 2:7; 1 Timothy 6:15-16**
- B. God the Son is the Savior of the world. Born of the virgin Mary, He declared His deity among men, died on the cross as the only complete and sufficient sacrifice for sin, arose bodily from the grave, and ascended to the Father. He presently sits at the right hand of the Father, interceding for believers until He returns to rapture them from the world. He will ultimately return to the earth to rule from the throne of David. **Matthew 1:21-23; Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 4:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; Titus 2:13; 1 Timothy 6:14-15**
- C. God the Holy Spirit is the manifest presence of deity. He convicts, guides, comforts, and teaches spiritual truths according to the written Word. At conversion, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells and gifts every believer for the purpose of ministry. **2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13, 5:18; Galatians 5:25**

**2. Our Belief in the Word of God:** We believe that the Bible, the 66 Books of the Old and New Testaments, was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is literally the Word of God, verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit, and inerrant as originally given by God. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian belief and life and is the infallible standard of our faith. **2 Timothy 1:13, 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6-7; Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 55:11**

**3. Our Belief in the Nature of Man:** Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God to live eternally with Him, but became a sinful creature by personal rebellion against God and perpetuated a sinful nature to all his descendants. Thus all people are universally sinful by nature and by choice. They are void of spiritual life and incapable of saving themselves. They stand under the righteous judgment and wrath of God, condemned to a literal, eternal, and fiery Hell. To be eternally separated from God is Hell, while to be eternally united with Him is Eternal Life. **Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a, 59:1-2; Romans 3:23, 6:23; John 2:25; Revelation 20:15**

**4. Our Belief in Salvation:** Salvation is a free gift of God by grace through faith; it is entirely the act of God apart from any work or merit of man. **Ephesians 2:8-9; Galatians 3:26**

- A. We believe in God's Sovereignty and in Human Responsibility. The facts that God chooses all who come to Him and that man chooses to come to God are entirely consistent in Scripture. Before the world began, God in His sovereignty purposed, planned and executed salvation. Man has the responsibility to receive this salvation and be saved, or reject it and suffer God's judgment. **Matthew 11:28; Isaiah 45:22, 55:7; Revelation 22:17; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:9-10, 13**
- B. We believe in the Vicarious Atonement for sins by the Blood of Jesus Christ. His substitutionary death, "the just for the unjust," is the only sufficient atonement for the sins of all mankind, yet effective only for the sins of those who believe. **Isaiah 53:4-7; 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Galatians 1:4**
- C. We believe in Regeneration. Regeneration is the act of God by which the human spirit passes from spiritual death to spiritual life in Christ, and is born again with a new nature. **John 3:3-17; 1 John 3:1-2; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:17**
- D. We believe in Justification. Justification is the declarative act of a Holy God whereby He declares righteous all who, by faith, trust in Jesus for salvation and eternally changes their standing before Him. **James 2:23; Romans 3:24, 4:5, 5:1; Titus 3:7; 2 Corinthians 5:19**
- E. We believe in Sanctification. At conversion, God sets apart every believer as a saint. All are commanded to pursue holiness by following the leadership of the Spirit of God in personally applying the truths and principles of the Word of God to their lives. **1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; Romans 8:29; Philippians 3:10, 1:6; Hebrews 10:10, 14**
- F. We believe in Eternal Security. Because believers are kept by the grace and power of God and not their own self-effort, salvation can never be lost; thus all believers shall spend eternity in the glorious and heavenly presence of God. **John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Romans 8:29-39**

**5. Our Belief in Jesus Christ's Second Coming:** We believe that Jesus Christ will literally return from Heaven in a personal, visible and glorious fashion. We believe that His return is the

Blessed Hope, for which all believers should continually watch and pray, and that it signals the consummation of the age and the final disposition of all creation. We also believe that the time of His return is unrevealed but always imminent. **Acts 1:11; Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13- 17; Mark 13:35-37; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58**

#### **6. Our Belief in the Church:**

- A. We believe in the Importance of the Local Church. A New Testament church is a local congregation of born-again, baptized believers united together to proclaim the Good News and exalt the Lord Jesus. **Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:25-27; 2 Corinthians 6:16**
- B. We believe in the Autonomy of the Local Church. A New Testament church has Jesus Christ as its only Head and is free to govern itself apart from ecclesiastical interference. **Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 6:1-7**
- C. We believe in the Two Ordinances of the Local Church. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water as a public profession of personal faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper is the sharing of the bread and the cup by the assembled church as a memorial to the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ. **Romans 6:3-5; Matthew 28:18-20, 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30**

**7. Our Belief in Stewardship:** We believe that God, the Creator and Owner of all things, has entrusted to us as Christians our lives, time, talents, influence, material wealth, and all things whatsoever we possess. As a steward of these things we are to administer them under the will of God for the purposes of Jesus Christ. In definite expression of this stewardship, we are to contribute systematically and proportionately of the gifts He has given to us. Through these gifts, we support our Church and its mission. **Psalms 24:1; 1 Chronicles 29:11; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Leviticus 27:30; 2 Corinthians 8:12, 9:6-7; Exodus 35:22**

### **Article IV. Affiliation**

FBCR shall follow Jesus Christ, its Head. As a New Testament church, it is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its affairs independent of any denomination or ecclesiastical body. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other believers in the evangelization of the world, FBCR is free to associate itself with any individuals or organizations who are intent on winning the lost to Jesus Christ and in agreement with our Basic Beliefs. As such, FBCR voluntarily affiliates itself with the Southern Baptist Convention.

## **II. CHURCH BYLAWS**

### **Article I: Church Membership**

**1. General:** All who desire to worship God "in spirit and in truth" are welcome at the First Baptist Church of Rockville, Maryland. FBCR anticipates attendees to be a combination of Members, believers who have not yet elected to become Members, and those seeking God. Recognizing this, and in order to provide unity of purpose, direction, and action, voting on issues coming before the Church is restricted to Members. FBCR reserves the exclusive right to determine and set biblical requirements for membership and the conditions of such membership.

**2. Membership:** Membership in FBCR is attained by:

- **Salvation:** Public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord followed by baptism by immersion, or

- **Transfer of a Letter:** Transferring of membership from another church of like faith and order, or
- **Statement of Faith:** Statement of faith in Jesus Christ and of having been baptized by immersion after conversion, or
- **Restoration:** Reinstatement to membership after repentance, restoration under Elder Team care, and confession in a regular Church service. (see Article XI: Church Discipline)
- **Completion of a Membership Class:** All persons (with the exception of a restored Member) seeking Church membership must complete the Church's membership class and agree with the Church Constitution. Completion of the class is optional for those who were Members on or before the date of this revision.

Each Member shall be entitled to one vote at all regular or special called business meetings of the Church when that Member is in attendance. If a Member expects to be absent from the meeting, he or she can vote by absentee ballot obtained from the Church office as long as the ballot is received prior to the business meeting.

**3. Termination of Membership:** Membership shall be terminated upon:

- The death of the Member,
- Transfer by letter to another church,
- Request of termination by the Member,
- Evidence of membership in another church,
- Absence longer than one year from the church with no forwarding information available, or
- Exclusion by disciplinary action by the Church (See Article XI: Church Discipline).

**4. Inactive Members:** Members who fail to support the church by regular attendance for a period of one year without good reason (e.g. shut-in, medical) will be contacted to determine if they wish to maintain their membership at FBCR and the course of conduct they must follow to do so. If they do not wish to support the Church, but wish to remain Members, they will become Inactive Members. As Inactive Members they cannot vote in Church matters until they are restored to membership by demonstrating faithfulness through regular attendance. If they do not wish to maintain their membership or if they cannot be contacted after repeated efforts, their membership will be terminated.

## **Article II: Overview of Church Government**

The system of governance at FBCR shall be in accordance with the New Testament. Operation of FBCR shall be directed by the Members through Church Leaders called or elected by the Members. The Church Leaders called or elected by the Members shall be organized into five standing Teams as follows:

- Pastoral Team
- Elder Team
- Stewardship Team
- Deacon Team
- Ministry Leadership Team (MLT)

Under this structure:

***The Pastors guide the Church,  
the Elders guard the Church,  
the Deacons serve the Church, and  
the Members gift the Church.***

### **Article III: Pastoral Team**

**1. Overview:** The Pastoral Team consists of the Senior Pastor and other staff members selected by the Senior Pastor. The Pastoral Team sets direction, determines the programming and ministries, gives vision and instructions to the various ministries, and oversees the day-to-day operations of the Church. The Elders can authorize the senior pastor to establish a transitional pastoral position. This individual may be considered, after training and mentoring under the current senior pastor, as a candidate for the senior pastor with a vote of 80% of the Members present at a special called business meeting. (Amended – business meeting held March 19, 2023)

**2. The Senior Pastor:** The membership shall call a Senior Pastor who is responsible and accountable for leading the Church. He is responsible for organizing, selecting, training and supervising the Pastoral Team and support staff of the Church. In creating and filling staff positions, the Senior Pastor may not financially obligate the Church by hiring a staff person without the direct approval of the Stewardship and Elder Teams. Before dismissing a Pastoral Team member or a support staff member, the Senior Pastor will consult with the Elder Team. Annually, the Senior Pastor shall be responsible for evaluating each member of the Pastoral Team and support staff and providing appropriate direction and recommendation for continuance of service.

**3. Senior Pastor Qualifications:** The Senior Pastor must meet the qualifications of an elder (see Article IV Section 2) and is a standing member of the Elder Team. He shall be an ordained minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, accepting fully the beliefs set forth in the Constitution. He shall exemplify spiritual maturity, a shepherd's heart for his flock, a heart for missions, sound doctrine and a spirit of cooperation. His family shall actively participate in the life of the Church.

**4. Senior Pastor Selection and Removal:** When the office of Senior Pastor becomes vacant the Elders will automatically become a Selection Team which shall establish and implement a process for selection of a recommended candidate to be presented to the membership. The Elders will seek the advice of the Members of the Church and may augment the Selection Team as they desire. The calling or removal of a Senior Pastor will require the affirmative vote of 80% of the Members present at a special called business meeting. The Elder Team may remove the Senior Pastor or any Pastoral Team or Support Staff member by unanimous vote of the Elders not on the Pastoral Team. Any removal must be based on a finding of continual and uncorrected doctrinal error or for serious moral failure inconsistent with God's Word.

### **Article IV: Elder Team**

**1. General and Duties:** In accordance with the practice of New Testament churches, Elders are spiritual leaders assisting in oversight of the direction of the Church. The Elder Team does not determine programming. This falls to the Pastoral Team. However, the Elder Team is responsible for annually evaluating programming based on its appropriateness and effectiveness in furthering the mission of the Church. The Elder Team makes their evaluation according to three criteria:

- The Church's mission
- The Church's resources
- The Church's doctrinal statement

In addition, Elders may be involved in counseling, disciplining, and teaching, and will have other specific duties as described in these Bylaws. While all ordained Elders in the Church can be called upon to support these duties, the Elder Team will consist of the Senior Pastor and six additional Elders. Other than the Senior Pastor, no member of the Pastoral Staff may serve as an Elder. In the event of a vacancy in the position of the Senior Pastor, the Elder Team will assume the responsibilities and authority of the Senior Pastor.

**2. Qualifications and Term of Service:** A candidate for Elder must be a Member of the church at least three years prior to his election to the Elder Team, unless he has been ordained as an Elder in another church of like faith and order. Elders and their families shall be active participants in the life of the Church. Elders shall serve for three-year terms, staggered to effect orderly transition from year to year. Furthermore, all Elders must meet the biblical qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Thus, an Elder must...

- *Be above reproach*
- *The husband of one wife*
- *Self-controlled*
- *Sensible*
- *Respectable*
- *Hospitable*
- *An able teacher*
- *Hold to the faithful message of the Bible*
- *An encourager with sound teaching*
- *Refutes those who contradict it [sound teaching]*
- *Not addicted to wine*
- *Not a bully but gentle*
- *Not quarrelsome*
- *One who manages his own household competently*
- *One who has his children under control with all dignity*
- *Not a new convert*
- *Have a good reputation among outsiders*
- *Not arrogant*
- *Not quick tempered*
- *Not greedy for money*
- *Righteous*
- *Holy*
- *Shepherd God's flock*
- *Be an example to the flock*

**3. Selection Process:** Annually, in July, the Elder Team, in consultation with the Ministry Leadership Team, shall nominate qualified candidates to fill the Elder Team vacancies for the coming year. Members of the Church are welcome to submit to the Elder Team the names of individuals they feel should serve as Elders for the coming year. Each nominated candidate will have completed training and a review by a committee of Elders prior to being placed on the list of candidates. The congregation will review the list for two weeks, question the candidates, as they individually feel led, and vote to affirm or reject the candidates at the annual business meeting in August. Any candidate approved by the congregation shall be ordained by the Church, unless he has been previously ordained as an Elder by FBCR or by another church of like faith and order. If necessary, vacancies occurring during the year will be filled on a temporary basis, at the discretion of the Elder Team, until completion of the scheduled annual selection process.

**4. Dismissal of an Elder:** If it becomes apparent that an Elder should not be serving in the office of Elder, he may resign or by unanimous vote of the other Elders, be immediately retired from the office.

### **Article V: Stewardship Team**

**1. General and Duties:** The Stewardship Team directs and oversees all financial matters of the Church and promotes financial stewardship within the Church membership. It also ensures that the Church is not financially compromised and the Ministry Teams operate within the resources of the Church. The Stewardship Team shall consist of the Church Treasurer, and at least six additional members, one of which shall be the Team leader, as well as two standing members - one Elder (who may not act as Team Leader) and the Church Accountant/Bookkeeper. The Stewardship Team shall develop written operating guidelines, annually set stewardship and team goals, and organize itself for efficient implementation of those guidelines and goals. The Team shall be governed by standard accounting practices with the admonition that even the perception of impropriety is to be avoided. In addition, in performing its duties, the Stewardship Team shall be governed by the following:

- The Church's fiscal year shall be from September 1 to August 31.
- The Church budget shall be prepared annually by the Pastoral Team in consultation with the Stewardship Team. The budget shall first be approved by the Elder Team and then by the Members at the annual Church business meeting in August.
- Monthly, the Stewardship Team shall present a financial report to the Elder Team and the Pastoral Team of all expenditures and the financial status of the Church in relation to the budget. This report shall be available to any Member who requests it. All funds and accounts of the Church shall be addressed in financial reports.
- Two-party accountability shall be implemented in financial transactions and procedures, except in emergencies.
- The Church shall follow faith principles, looking to the Lord to supply the needs through His people, with respect to funds needed for the support of its ministries.
- Approved evangelistic mission projects shall be financed by offerings solely designated for missions. The totality of these offerings shall be used exclusively for evangelistic missions.
- Special offerings may be taken for designated purposes if they are approved in advance by the Elder Team.
- Procedures shall be adopted to assure that an individual's contribution is maintained in confidence. The Stewardship Team shall keep a record of individual contributions, insofar as identifiable when made, and furnish statements of contributions to each giver at the end of each quarter and at the end of each calendar year. The Elders of the Church may refer to the individual contributions of a Member when necessary in the performance of their duties, but only after an affirmative vote of the majority of the Elder Team. This information will be held in strictest confidence by the Elder Team.

**2. Qualifications and Term of Service:** The Stewardship Team Leader, the Treasurer and all other Members of the Stewardship Team who directly or indirectly handle or have access to funds of the Church shall possess the moral and spiritual qualifications as described in Acts 6:3 and shall have professional skills necessary to perform their assigned task. To effect efficient operations, the Stewardship Team shall establish the terms for all Members of the Team not to exceed four years, other than the Treasurer, who shall be a standing member of the Team (See Article VIII), and the Church Accountant/Bookkeeper.



**3. Selection Process:** Annually, in July, the Stewardship Team, in consultation with the Elder Team, shall determine the number of team members needed for the next year and select qualified candidates to fill the vacancies for the coming year. Members of the Church are welcome to submit to the Stewardship Team Leader the names of individuals they feel should serve for the coming year. Each selected candidate will have completed training and a review by a committee of the Stewardship Team prior to being selected for service. The congregation will review the list for two weeks, question the candidates, as they individually feel led, and vote to affirm or reject the candidates at the annual Church business meeting in August. Vacancies occurring during the year are to be filled on a temporary basis at the discretion of the Stewardship Team until completion of the scheduled annual selection process.

#### **Article VI: Deacon Team**

**1. General and Duties:** In accordance with the meaning of the word “deacon” and the practice of churches described in the New Testament, deacons are ordained servants of Christ and of the Church, providing assistance to the Pastoral Team. The deacons standing duties will be to assist with the two ordinances of the Church, to administer the Church’s Benevolence Fund and to assist the Senior Pastor with tasks as assigned. While all ordained deacons in the Church can be called upon to support these duties, there will be at least twelve deacons serving on the deacon team at any one time. The number of deacons can be increased if needed to complete their assigned tasks. The deacons shall have no governing authority.

**2. Qualifications and Term of Service:** Deacons shall be Members for at least one year who possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons shall serve for three-year terms, staggered to effect orderly transition from year to year. A husband and a wife shall not serve as deacons at the same time.

**3. Selection Process:** Annually, in July, the deacons, in consultation with Elder Team, shall determine the number of deacons needed for the next year and select qualified candidates to fill the deacon vacancies. Members of the Church are welcome to submit to the deacons the names of individuals they feel should serve as deacons for the coming year. Each selected candidate will have completed training and a review by a committee of deacons prior to being placed on the candidates list. The congregation will review the list for two weeks, question the candidates, as they individually feel led, and vote to affirm or reject the candidates at the annual Church business meeting in August. Candidates selected will be ordained by the church, unless already ordained as a deacon in another church of like faith and order. Vacancies occurring during the year are to be filled on a temporary basis, at the discretion of the deacon team until completion of the scheduled annual selection process.

#### **Article VII: Ministry Leadership Team and Ministry Teams**

**1. The Ministry Leadership Team (MLT):** The MLT is composed of representatives of each active Ministry Team in the Church. This Team will meet monthly to coordinate and evaluate Church ministry activities. Semi-annually, the Elder Team shall meet with the MLT to evaluate the ministry activities of the teams. The MLT shall elect a leader and other officers as appropriate to effect sound coordination. Subgroups shall be formed as necessary.

**2. Ministry Teams:** Ministry Teams shall be established by the Pastoral Team, as led by the Holy Spirit, and staffed according to the needs of the Team. The Ministry Teams are encouraged to act with discretion, innovation and flexibility, consistent with budgetary constraints and the written operating guidelines established by the Stewardship Team. The

Ministry Teams shall establish their own operating procedures and their own yearly goals. If a Ministry Team is no longer needed, it will be disbanded at the direction of the Pastoral Team in consultation with the Elder Team.

### **Article VIII: Church Officers**

**1. Overview:** Officers of the Church shall be the Church Clerk, Treasurer, and Trustees. Such Officers shall be nominated by the Elder Team and approved by the Members at the annual business meeting. By unanimous vote of the Elder Team, elected Church Officers may be dismissed from office if their conduct has harmed the testimony of Jesus Christ.

**2. Church Clerk:** The Church Clerk shall:

- Keep an accurate record of each Church business meeting and/or other official actions of the Church.
- Assure required notice is given of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these Bylaws.
- Compute the quorums for meetings as required.
- Maintain inventory of all legal documents. All such documents shall be kept on permanent file in the Church office.

**3. Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall act as the Church's financial officer and shall be experienced in general accounting procedures. The Treasurer shall not serve more than two consecutive three year terms. The Treasurer shall establish and monitor procedures for all financial transactions. The Treasurer shall report the status of the Church's financial position to the membership semi-annually and to the Elder Team and the Pastoral Team monthly or as requested.

**4. Trustees:** The Elder Team shall appoint three Trustees to serve as legal officers for the Church. Their term of service shall be six years, staggered to effect orderly transition from year to year. The Church's Trustees act only at the discretion and direction of the Church. The Trustees shall have legal or business experience. The Trustees shall serve as legal representatives with signature authority in all transactions of the Church having the power, upon specific vote of the Church authorizing each action, to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer Church property. Trustees have no authority to make decisions without Church authorization. If a Trustee acts without the authority of the Church, he or she is personally liable for such actions.

### **Article IX: Church Ordinances**

The Pastor, or his designee, as assisted by the deacons, shall administer the two Church Ordinances:

- **Baptism:** The Church shall receive for baptism any person publicly professing faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- **The Lord's Supper:** The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper in accordance with New Testament instructions.

### **Article X: Church Meetings**

**1. Worship Services:** The Church shall meet at least weekly for worship.

**2. Business Meetings:** Annually, in August, the Church shall hold a business meeting to assess the direction of the Church, establish the Church budget for the next year, and elect church leaders. In addition to this annual meeting, a special business meeting may be called upon the request of the Stewardship Team, the Senior Pastor, the Elder Team, or upon request of at least 10% of the Church Members. A two-week notice must be given for all business meetings unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The Elder Team shall moderate all Church business meetings.

The following shall serve as direction for conduct of the business meetings:

- A. A quorum shall consist of at least 30% of Members eligible to vote.
- B. The meeting shall be conducted in an orderly manner emphasizing the “one another” clauses of the New Testament. An agenda of all matters to be discussed at the meeting shall be published one week in advance of the business meeting. All formal proposals to be presented to the Members for action shall be first reviewed by the Ministry Leadership Team. All matters not on the agenda of the business meeting that are brought to the attention of the membership can be discussed but must wait until the next business meeting to be voted on.
- C. Minutes shall be taken by the Church Clerk. Such minutes shall be made available to Members at a reasonable time after the meeting and be retained in the Church files for at least five years.
- D. Each Member of the Church shall have one vote, which can be cast at the meeting or prior to the meeting by absentee ballot obtained at the Church office. A majority of those voting shall determine action on all items of business except for the following:
  - A two-thirds (2/3) majority of Members eligible to vote is required for buying, selling, mortgaging, leasing or transferring significant Church property, and for amending the Bylaws.
  - An 80% majority of Members eligible to vote is required for calling or dismissing the Senior Pastor, amending the Constitution, removing a Church Officer or terminating membership due to disciplinary action.

### **Article XI: Church Discipline**

Members who become opposed to the Statement of Basic Beliefs or to the Church Covenant contained in the Constitution, or who engage in conduct obviously unbecoming to a Christian (I Corinthians 5:9-10) or who spread doctrinal error (I Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:17,18) or divisiveness (Romans 16:17) are subject to Church discipline, which could ultimately result in expulsion from membership.

The goal of Church discipline at each step is restoration of the offender to full fellowship and standing in the body (Galatians 6:1). The steps in the discipline process are as follows:

- When such a breach of conduct or belief is brought to the attention of a fellow Church Member, this Member shall approach the person in error according to the principles of Matthew 18:15-17.
- If there is no change in action, the Member shall bring the situation to an Elder for investigation, action and resolution as soon as possible. The Elder will take no action if the Member who brought the accusation to his attention has not first approached his wandering brother or sister.
- Following the principles of Matthew 18, if not resolved, the Elder Team will address the situation, meeting with the offending Member if all possible, and administering whatever remedial actions deemed necessary to restore the brother or sister. These actions will be kept confidential.
- If the Elder Team determines that the situation will not be rectified, a recommendation regarding termination of membership will be made by the Elder Team at a closed Church meeting, typically at the conclusion of the next available worship service.
- The offending Member may be removed from membership by an 80% affirmative vote of the Members eligible to vote in the meeting, and shall be so notified whether in person or by registered mail.
- Reinstatement to membership shall occur only after repentance, restoration under Elder Team care, and confession in a regular Church service.

**BYLAW UPDATES:**

- **This Constitution and Bylaws was approved in a Special Called Business Meeting on February 13, 2005.**
- **The fiscal year of the church was voted on and changed in 2015. Changed from calendar year to "September 1 - August 31" as fiscal year.**
- **The bylaws for were updated/voted on in 2022 in a Business meeting extending the Pastor's responsibilities to aid in hiring another pastor. (Amended – business meeting held March 19, 2023)**
- **Amended on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 to appropriate a change from March 19, 2023 revision. Corrected fiscal year throughout entire document.**