

The Bethesda Baptist Church Constitution

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Preamble

The Constitution of Bethesda Baptist Church shall be composed of its Covenant of Membership, Statement of Faith, and Bylaws. It is not intended to replace the authority of Scripture over the church.

The purpose of this Constitution is to apply in this church those principles of self government consistent with the Word of God. God's Word is the binding rule of life for His people. Continuance in His word is the proof of our profession.

It is the law of our Lord that we love one another as He loved us (John 13:34-35). We, the members of Bethesda Baptist Church, freely subscribe to this royal law (James 2:8) and pledge our mutual commitments in the following Covenant of Membership.

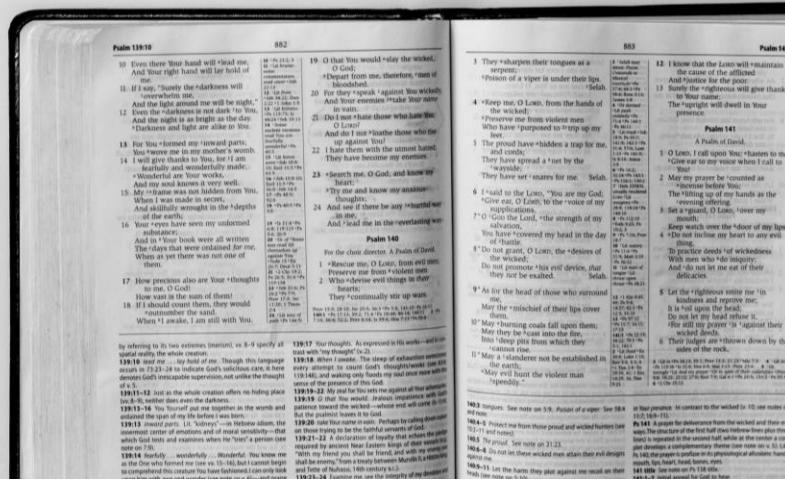
Covenant of Membership

Having been, as we trust, brought by divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give ourselves wholly to Him, we do now solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other, to walk together in Him, with brotherly love, to His glory, as our common Lord. We do, therefore, in His strength, engage:

- That we will exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully warn, exhort, and admonish each other as occasion may require.
- That we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but will uphold the public worship of God, and the ordinances of His house.
- That we will not omit private and family religion at home, nor neglect the great duty of religiously training our children, and those under our care, for the service of Christ and the enjoyment of Him.
- That, as we are the light of the world, and salt of the earth, we will seek divine aid to enable us to deny ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and to walk circumspectly in the world, that we may best honor our Lord.
- That we will cheerfully contribute of our property, according as God has prospered us, for the maintenance of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, for the support of the poor, and to spread the Gospel over the earth.
- That we will in all conditions, even till death, strive to live to the glory of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

“Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”¹

¹ New Hampshire Confession, 1894



Statement of Faith

Bethesda Baptist Church holds a set of distinctive beliefs in common with persons historically referred to as Baptists. Among these beliefs are the priesthood of every believer, the autonomy of the local church, complete separation of church and state, religious liberty for all, and the absolute Authority of Scripture.

The pre-eminent principle of our historic faith is that the Word of God is the final authority for all faith and practice. The Scriptures, and not tradition, shall determine what His church believes. His priorities shall dictate our program and test the worth of all we do.

As Baptists, we recognize the principle of soul liberty for all people in matters of faith. However, we believe that all true Christians affirm certain essential doctrines; such as the doctrine of Christ, specifically His deity, His incarnation and virgin birth, His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross for sinners, His bodily resurrection, and His coming again personally and visibly.

The New Hampshire Confession, as represented in the Hiscox 1894 edition, shall essentially serve as a summary of our beliefs (with the exception of the article on the Christian Sabbath). We view this Confession as a guideline, not a creed.

It shall not be binding on the conscience as though it had equal authority with Scripture.

Statement of Faith

I. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men, divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

II. THE TRUE GOD

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

III. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense and excuse.

Statement of Faith

IV. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

We believe the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of His free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

V. THE WAY OF SALVATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who according to the will of the Father, assumed our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

VI. OF REGENERATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that regeneration, or the new birth, is that change wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, by which a new nature and a spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus; a holy disposition is given to the mind, the will subdued, the dominion of sin broken, and the affections changed from a love of sin and self, to a love of holiness and God; the change is instantaneous, effected solely by the power of God, in a manner incomprehensible to reason; the evidence of it is found in a changed disposition of mind, the fruits of righteousness, and a newness of life. And without it salvation is impossible.

Statement of Faith

VII. OF REPENTANCE

We believe the Scriptures teach that repentance is a personal act, prompted by the Spirit; and consists in a godly sorrow for sin, as offensive to God and ruinous to the soul; that it is accompanied with great humiliation in view of one's sin and guilt, together with prayer for pardon; also by sincere hatred of sin, and persistent turning away from, and abandonment of, all that is evil and unholy. Since none are sinless in this life, repentance needs to be often repeated.

VIII. OF FAITH

We believe that the Scriptures teach that faith, as an evangelical grace wrought by the Spirit, is the medium through which Christ is received by the soul as its sacrifice and Savior. It is an assent of the mind and a consent of the heart, consisting mainly of belief and trust; the testimony of God is implicitly accepted and believed as true, while Christ is unreservedly trusted for salvation; by it the believer is brought into vital relations with God, freely justified, and lives as seeing Him who is invisible. Faith cannot save, but it reveals Christ to the soul as a willing and sufficient Savior, and commits the heart and life to Him.

IX. OF JUSTIFICATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on the principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God; and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

Statement of Faith

X. OF ADOPTION

We believe the Scriptures teach that adoption is a gracious act, by which the Father, for the sake of Christ, accepts believers to the estate and condition of children, by a new and spiritual birth; sending the Spirit of adoption into their hearts, whereby they become members of the family of God, and entitled to all the rights, privileges, and promises of children; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, to the heritage of the saints on earth, and an inheritance reserved in heaven for them.

XI. OF SANCTIFICATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means – especially the Word of God, self-examination, self denial, watchfulness, and prayer; and in the practice of all godly exercises and duties.

XII. THE PERSERVERANCE OF SAINTS

We believe the Scriptures teach that such as are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will not utterly fall away and finally perish, but will endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

XIII. THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen man to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their sinful nature; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the invisible Church.

Statement of Faith

XIV. A GOSPEL CHURCH

We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its only spiritual officers are bishops (or pastors) and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

XV. CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ, in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. We believe prolonged neglect of it casts doubt on the vitality of one's union with Christ and thus makes one unfit to share in the Lord's Supper.

ON ARTICLE XV. CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

We practice believer's baptism by immersion but believe that a differing mode of believer's baptism should not necessarily be a matter of exclusion from church membership. In fact, there may be rare instances where we find it wise to baptize a believer other than by immersion (e.g. a health issue which militates against complete submersion into water). Therefore we also recognize other modes of believer's baptism such as affusion (pouring of water) or aspersion (sprinkling of water) as valid. Those who have been baptized as believers in modes other than immersion and who present themselves for church membership will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Statement of Faith

XVI. THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Lord's Supper is a provision of bread and wine, as symbols of Christ's body and blood, partaken of by the members of Christ's church, in commemoration of the suffering and death of their Lord; showing their faith and participation in the merits of His sacrifice, and their hope of eternal life through His resurrection from the dead; its observance to be preceded by faithful self-examination.

XVII. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. But that civil rulers have no rights of control over, or of interference with, religious matters.

XVIII. RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are, in His sight, wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in this life and after death.

XIX. THE WORLD TO COME

We believe the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day, Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless sorrow, and the righteous to endless joy; and this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.²

² Articles I-XX, New Hampshire Confession, 1894; From Hiscox, New Directory for Baptist Churches

Statement of Faith

ON ARTICLE XIX. THE WORLD TO COME

Holy Scripture reveals more about our Lord's return than could be contained in Article XIX. We believe and accept at face value all that the Bible teaches concerning the promised, personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom on earth. Furthermore, we believe in the great tribulation, the rise of a personal anti-Christ, the rapture of living saints, and the salvation of Israel's remnant.

Since the 19th century, the doctrine of last things has generated much controversy among godly men who differ in their opinions as to the nature and sequence of end-time events. Such controversy has polarized the church and needs to be addressed.

It is our belief that the controversy is the result of an improper perception of the purpose of prophetic revelation. The spirit of prophecy is neither to satisfy curiosity nor to systematize future events, but to testify concerning Jesus (Revelation 19:10). While God has given us the revelation of His Son (Revelation 1:1), He has retained under His own power the knowledge of the times and seasons of His coming (Acts 1:7). The uniform purpose of prophetic information is to shape our present lifestyle by a holy expectation that our Lord may come within our lifetime. Any understanding of Christ's return that does not produce holiness of life is out of balance with Biblical purpose and emphasis. No system of eschatology can be faithful to Scripture that errs in its revealed emphasis.

Historically, Baptists have taught that every believer has the right to understand for himself what God has spoken. He may systematize the events of the second coming according to his best understanding of Scripture, while allowing others the same liberty. There is sufficient latitude within the guidelines of Article XX for brethren to disagree. Since all such systems are of human origin, they shall not be a test for fellowship at Bethesda Baptist Church.



Bylaws

The Word of Christ is authority for His church. Where His Word speaks, His church submits in spirit and letter. Where His Word is silent, His church is at liberty to establish policies and procedures for the purpose of maintaining all things decently and in order, and providing for things honest in the sight of all men.

Those policies and procedures established by the church are contained in these Bylaws. Being, presently, the best understanding of sincere men, they are to be considered neither sacred nor infallible. They are subject to change by the church in accordance with due process herein described. In them place no confidence for the security of our fellowship, but only in the Lord who is the Great shepherd and bishop of our souls.

Bylaws

ARTICLE I: NAME AND LOCATION OF THE CHURCH

The name assumed by the church, and by which it shall be known, is Bethesda Baptist Church of Allen Park, Michigan. Its address shall be 10000 Reeck Road, Allen Park, Michigan 48101.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE OF THIS CHURCH

It shall be the purpose of this church to bring glory to our God, to be a source of strength and encouragement to His people and to spread the Gospel of His saving grace to all the world by all scriptural means.

ARTICLE III: CONGREGATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The government of Bethesda Baptist Church of Allen Park, Michigan, is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Therefore, its form of government shall be Congregational rather than Episcopal or Presbyterian.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Requirements for Membership

Any person shall be eligible for membership in this church who:

- Gives credible evidence by a transformed life of repentance toward
- God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Has been scripturally baptized as a disciple of Jesus Christ publicly confessing his faith.
- Freely enters into its Covenant of Membership.
- Willingly submits to be instructed in accordance with its Statement of Faith.
- Willingly submits to the government and discipline expressed in its Bylaws.

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ARTICLE IV: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP *(cont.)*

Section 2 – Reception into Membership

Any person may be received into membership by consent of the church who:

- Has informed the pastors of his desire for membership.
- Meets the requirements set forth in Section 1.
- Can be recommended to the church by the pastors.

Section 3 – Termination of Membership

The membership of any person shall be terminated who:

- Is removed from our midst by death.
- Unites with another church.
- Requests to be released from his covenant obligations.
- Neglects his covenant obligation by habitually forsaking the assembly of himself with the church, unless providentially hindered.
- Persists in his breach of the Covenant of Membership, as described in Article IV, Section 4.

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ARTICLE IV: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP *(cont.)*

Section 4 – Discipline of Members

- The authority for the church to discipline its members is inherent in the nature of the church. The mutual obligation to walk together in harmony and holiness both in doctrine and deportment is specifically expressed in the Covenant of Membership and freely entered into as a condition of membership.
- The immediate purpose of all discipline by the church is to restore a negligent member to his covenant obligations. Its ultimate purpose is to maintain a pure church.
- Personal conflicts between members are to be resolved in a matter consistent with the procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15-22. The church shall be the final arbitrator of unresolved disputes between its members. Failure to heed the counsel of the church may result in public censure and dismissal from membership.
- Conduct offensive to Christian conscience such as immorality (I Corinthians 5:11-13), public scandal (I Corinthians 6:1-10), divisiveness (Romans 16:17), persistence in doctrinal error (Titus 3:9-10), and disorderly conduct (II Thessalonians 3:14-15), are subject to church discipline consistent with the procedure outlined in I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Thessalonians 3:14-15.
- A disfellowshipped member may be restored to fellowship and membership of the church upon his genuine repentance and request for restoration, in accordance with the instruction of II Corinthians 2:5-11.
- A pastor is subject to the same church discipline as other members as described in Article IV, Section 4, with the following exception. The church may not receive an accusation against a pastor except on the confirmation of two or three witnesses in accordance with the due process of I Timothy 5:19-20.

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ARTICLE V: PASTORS

The highest office in the New Testament church is that of pastor/shepherd (I Peter 5:2-4; Ephesians 4:11), and overseer (I Timothy 3:1).

Section 1 – Definition

By definition, a pastor is a male who officially serves in the office of pastor.

Section 2 – Authority

Pastors shall have oversight of the church in all its life and ministry, exercising executive authority in the name of the church and accountable to the church. The pastors shall share mutually the responsibility for the care of the church. The emphasis of their individual labors shall be consistent with their gifts and calling (I Timothy 5:17).

Section 3 – Duties

- It shall be the duty of the pastors to cause the church to function as a body (Ephesians 4:12) by equipping saints for ministry edifying to the body. They shall lead the church, being watchful for the spiritual welfare of each member. They shall nurture the church with sound doctrine and exhortation consistent with the Statement of Faith of this church.
- For all civil matters, the pastors of the church shall represent the church as its Trustees and be recognized by the government as such. As Trustees, the pastors shall have responsibility for the oversight of the properties and funds of the church in accordance with these Bylaws.
- The pastors shall organize themselves and adopt such procedures as necessary to carry out their responsibilities. At least a majority vote of the pastors shall decide issues before them.
- In the event that the number of Directors (Trustees) falls below the minimum required by the State of Michigan, the Directors shall recommend to the congregation a sufficient number of Temporary Director candidates and their lengths of service so as to satisfy the State's requirement. Upon the approval of a majority of the eligible voting members present and voting at a Business Meeting called for that purpose, the Temporary Director candidate or candidates shall serve as Directors:
 - for their approved lengths of service, or
 - until the number of Elders meets the State's requirement, or
 - until the Director resigns, or
 - until the Director is removed by a majority vote of the other Directors and the approval of a majority of the eligible voting members present and voting at a Business Meeting called for that purpose.

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ARTICLE V: PASTORS *(cont.)*

Section 4 – Qualifications

Pastors shall be qualified for office in accordance with I Timothy 3:1-7. The following characteristics are essential:

- They must desire the work of spiritual oversight and demonstrate that desire by their relationship to the Body.
- They must give evidence of spiritual maturity.
- They must possess the spiritual gifts of teaching and leading.
- The church must be willing to submit to their leadership and benefit from their teaching.

Section 5 – Installation

As many as give evidence of these qualifications may be placed in the office of pastor upon:

- Nomination by the qualifications listed in section 4.
- Unanimous agreement of the existing pastors.
- Subsequent confirmation by three-fourths of the members present and voting at a business meeting called for that purpose.
- Public ordination to the office of pastor.

Section 6 – Term of Office

For continuity, a pastor shall serve for an indefinite term of service until such time as he desires to be relieved of his responsibilities or as long as he shall remain qualified for office.

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ARTICLE V: PASTORS *(cont.)*

Section 7 – Number

- The office of pastor is intended to be occupied by more than one man (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23).
- The number of pastors shall be as many as are qualified (in accordance with Section 4) to be installed in the office of pastor (in accordance with Section 5).
- Should the needs of the church require pastors other than are available within the church, the pastors may recommend to the church a qualified
- man from outside the church.

Section 8 – Financial Support

- The responsibility of the church for the financial support of its pastors is a matter of biblical principle (I Corinthians 9:7-18, Galatians 6:6), especially for those who labor in preaching and teaching (I Timothy 5:17). However, this does not exclude those from serving as pastors who choose to support themselves in part or in whole by other employment (I Corinthians 9:6, 12, 15).
- In the event that a pastor shall receive a salary from the church for his ministry, an agreement shall first be presented by the pastors to the church for its approval. Such agreement shall include a job description, financial details, and other terms of employment.

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ARTICLE VI: DEACON

The second office in the New Testament church is that of deacon (Philippians 1:1).

Section 1 – Definition

By definitions, a deacon is a person who serves in the office of deacon.

Section 2 – Responsibilities

Deacons shall have administrative responsibility as delegated to them by the pastors to whom they shall be accountable.

Section 3 – Duties

It shall be the duty of the deacons to assist the pastors in the service of the church.

Section 4 – Qualifications

Deacons shall be qualified for office in accordance with I Timothy 3:8-12. The following characteristics are essential:

- They must give evidence of spiritual growth toward maturity.
- Their service must be motivated by concern for the best interests of the church.
- They must be proven faithful in the discharge of their responsibilities.
- They must be loyal to their commitments.

Section 5 – Installation

As many as give evidence of these qualifications may be placed in office upon:

- Nomination by the congregation in recognition of the qualifications listed in section 4.
- Appointment to the office by the pastors.
- Subsequent ratification by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church.

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ARTICLE VI: DEACON *(cont.)*

Section 6 – Term of Office

For flexibility, deacons shall serve for a period of one year. They may succeed themselves in office as long as they remain spiritually qualified and duly appointed.

Section 7 – Number

The pastors may appoint from among those nominated by the church as many deacons as needed to fulfill the ministry for the year.

ARTICLE VII: OTHER APPOINTEES & COMMITTEES

Section 1 – Treasurer

- The pastors shall appoint a Treasurer who shall conduct his activities in accordance with financial policies and procedures as established by the pastors or these Bylaws.
- It shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer to hold and disburse funds as follows:
 - All monies shall be deposited in banks or financial institutions designated for that purpose.
 - All disbursements shall be made upon receipt of an approved voucher authorizing payment.
 - All checks shall be signed by two persons authorized by the pastors.
 - The Treasurer shall submit a detailed financial report in writing each month to the pastors and at each regular business meeting of the church.
 - The Treasurer shall make his report available to the Financial Auditor along with its supporting bank statements.

Section 2 – Financial Auditor

- The church shall nominate and elect a Financial Auditor other than the Treasurer at its annual meeting.
- It shall be the duty of the Auditor to routinely review the treasurer's report and verify to the church at its annual business meeting that the report is in agreement with the bank statements for the corresponding period.

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ARTICLE VII: OTHER APPOINTEES & COMMITTEES *(cont.)*

Section 3 – Temporary Committee on Staff Personnel

A Temporary Committee on Staff Personnel composed of deacons shall review the financial needs of the pastoral staff and recommend their findings to the church for budget adjustments.

Section 4 – Appointments

The pastors shall appoint as many additional persons as needed to carry out the ministry.

- All officers of the church, teachers and other appointees, must be members in good standing of the church. Officers shall have attained 21 years of age.
- The term of all offices and appointments shall be one year unless otherwise specified.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

Section 1 – Public Services

The church shall assemble regularly for worship, instruction, prayer, fellowship, and observance of the ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Section 2 – Business Meetings

The church shall convene on the fourth Wednesday of January. This meeting shall be the annual business meeting of the church.

- A special business meeting of the church may be called by the pastors to transact any matters of business. Such meetings shall be posted in the church bulletin or announced in a regular church service preceding the day appointed.
- The agenda of the special business meeting shall be restricted to the business announced.
- Members of the church who desire a special business meeting shall make their request to the pastors who shall decide if such a meeting shall be called.

Section 3 – Chairmanship

All meetings of the church shall be presided over by the pastors or their designate.

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ARTICLE IX: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section 1 – Rules of Order

Business meetings of the church shall be conducted in general accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 2 – Voting

- Any member of the church having attained 21 years of age is entitled to vote on any matter presented to the church for its vote, except where legal matters would require otherwise.
- Unless otherwise specified, a simple majority vote of the members present and voting shall be sufficient for adoption of the motion.
- Substantive matters shall be voted on by secret ballot. A secret ballot on any matter to be voted on may be requested by motion from the floor and adoption by the church.

Section 3 – Quorum

Twenty percent of the total members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum at any business meeting of the church.

Section 4 – Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots shall be available to members upon request and with the approval of the pastors under the following circumstances:

- There is just cause for their absence from the meeting.
- The issue being voted on is such that the person may be informed on the issue without being present at the meeting to hear the discussion.

Section 5 – Supplemental Policies and Procedures

The pastors shall institute such additional policies and procedures as implement the goals and objectives of a New Testament church. Such policies and procedures shall be consistent with New Testament church principles and the spirit and specifics of the Bylaws of this church. The church may review and amend these policies and procedures at any regular business meeting or special business meeting called for that purpose.

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ARTICLE IX: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES *(cont.)*

Section 6 – Amendment to the Constitution

This Constitution may be amended by the majority vote of the members present and voting in a business meeting of the church, provided the wording of said amendment is presented to the congregation at least two Sundays preceding the meeting.

ARTICLE X: CHURCH FINANCE

Section 1 – Financial Support

The work of the church shall be supported by tithes and free-will offerings of its constituent membership.

Section 2 – Budget

The pastors shall present to the church, for its review and subsequent adoption, a budget incorporating the estimated operating expense of the church for the fiscal year.

Budget recommendations relating to the financial support of pastors shall proceed from the Temporary Committee on Staff Personnel composed of deacons and presided over by a deacon.

Section 3 – Financial Administration

The administration of the financial policies and procedures of the church shall be the duty of the persons listed below in accordance with these Bylaws:

- Treasurer, see Article VII, Section 1.
- Financial Auditor, see Article VII, Section 3.

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ARTICLE X: CHURCH FINANCE *(cont.)*

Section 4 – Audit

The financial records of the Treasurer shall be subject to audit. The Financial Auditor may at any regular business meeting of the church or any special business meeting called for that purpose recommend to the church an independent professional audit of the financial records of the church provided he shall include both the name of the auditing firm and the estimated expense of the audit in his recommendation.

Upon the adoption of his recommendation by the church, the Auditor shall secure the audit and report the same to the church at a special business meeting called for that purpose.

The Treasurer shall be authorized to make payment for the audit upon receipt of an invoice.

Section 5 – Encumbrance

No person, board, or committee shall be authorized to borrow money, or place a mortgage or lien on the property of the church without the express prior approval of the church.

Upon approval of the church, the pastors or their designate, shall have the power to execute and deliver in the name of the church and in behalf of the church such notes, bonds, mortgages, or other instrument of indebtedness as shall be required to secure a loan authorized by the church.

ARTICLE XI: DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of the church, its property, whether real, personal, or otherwise shall be transferred by the church to a non-profit corporation whose purpose shall be consistent with Article II of these Bylaws.