



# **CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS**

**(Ratified December 21, 2008)**

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# CONSTITUTION

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## **Preamble**

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

## **Article I: Name**

This body shall be known as the Grass Valley Baptist Church of Winnemucca, Nevada located at 4150 W. Thomas Canyon Road, Winnemucca, Nevada 89445.

## **Article II: Mission and Vision**

The mission of Grass Valley Baptist Church is to bring glory and honor to God through faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to His Great Commandment (Mark 12:30-31) and Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Fulfillment of the mission of Grass Valley Baptist Church requires that we have a clear and common vision of what God has called us to do. Through unity of vision, quality communication, and the direction of the Holy Spirit, we can then employ specific ministries in fulfillment of our mission. These ministries will be developed on Biblical truths and bathed in prayer. Although these ministries will certainly change with time and periodic evaluation, all of the ministries will work towards Grass Valley Baptist Church being characterized by the following vision.

### **Worship**

We will worship the true and living God in a manner that is focused on who God is, what He has done, and what He has promised to do. Our worship will be Biblical, welcoming and relevant, and will encourage all people to spiritually respond to God.

### **Discipleship**

We will lead all people to serve God and His purposes through the preaching and teaching of God's inspired and inerrant Word. People will be challenged and encouraged to become like Christ through the disciplines of prayer, giving, fasting, Scripture memory, and Bible study. This discipleship will result in people who are possessing and growing in the fruit of the Spirit.

### **Evangelism**

We will equip and encourage people to regularly share God's plan of salvation with others in their daily lives and to verify their words through godly living. We will take the gospel message out into the streets of our community and beyond.

### **Missions**

We will spread the gospel across Nevada and around the world through our people, prayers, and financial support. We will inform, encourage, and provide opportunities for people to become personally involved in missions.

### **Ministry**

We will encourage and teach people to understand how God has molded and gifted us to serve. This will focus us on seeking ways we can serve God and others rather than how we can be served by the church. Ministry privileges will be shared to allow each member to serve with excellence.

### **Fellowship**

We will be a church where every attender feels connected to the body of Christ called Grass Valley Baptist Church and has a way to share, grow, and be encouraged regularly. This fellowship will extend beyond personal relationships to include a spiritual unity and respect among our body of believers.

### **Leadership**

Our church will have godly men serve as pastors and elders who live by the standards given by God for these positions in the Bible. All leaders of our church will be godly examples in all areas of their life and prioritize the development of men, women, and children to be future leaders in their homes, work, church, and community. Following the example of Christ, the leadership of our church will sacrificially put the needs of God and the church before their own desires. Good and godly communication will be a high priority for every church leader and member.

### **Family**

Because of the Biblical importance placed on the family, we will constantly be on guard to protect it from Satan's attack by strengthening and supporting families in the church and community. We will work with husbands and fathers in exercising their spiritual headship by lovingly leading the family and modeling humble submission to God and others. We will work with wives and mothers in respecting and submitting to their husband's spiritual leadership and engaging in the family's plan for the discipleship of the family. We will equip and encourage parents in raising their children to love and serve God. We will encourage children to honor and obey their parents. We will pray for unsaved family members. We will be an extended family to one another as well as to singles, widow(er)s, and orphans in our community.

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

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000 with the following exception. We see the New Testament giving evidence of elders (which includes pastors) and deacons as the scriptural officers of the church. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to fulfilling the mission God has given both to

us personally and to our congregation. (See Article II above.) The ordinances of the church are believers' baptism and the Lord's Supper. (See Article III of the Bylaws.)

#### **Article IV: Church Covenant**

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, and the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations; and to work towards the fulfillment of its mission and vision. (See Article II above.)

We also strive to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances, to walk prudently in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our commitments, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid the occasion and appearance of sin, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

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 Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the commands of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

#### **Article V: Polity and Relationships**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the members shall constitute the membership. (See Article I of the Bylaws.)

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

This church is subject to the control of no other religious or denominational body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Northeast Baptist Association, the Nevada Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. This church receives the Holy Scripture as its authority in all matters of faith and practice.

# BYLAWS

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## Article I: Church Membership

### Section 1: General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

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

### Section 2: Candidacy

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be counseled by the pastor and/or elders and, all being in order, shall be presented to the church at any regular church service or business meeting for membership in any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and after baptism according to the policies of this church.
2. By the promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church.
3. By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtainable.
4. Others may request membership in the church and in these cases shall be counseled by the pastor and/or elders to determine if their conversion and baptism represents a like faith and order. If so, they may be accepted by statement.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor or elders for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days.

### Section 3: New Member Orientation

New members of this church are expected to participate in the church's new member orientation.

### Section 4: Privileges of Members

1. Any member may bring a motion for consideration by the body at a business meeting of the church.
2. Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present or, when the elders deem necessary, by absentee ballot.
3. Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church, unless specified otherwise in this document. Consideration shall include scriptural requirements of the office as well as personal Christian maturity of members.

4. Every member of the church may participate in the Lord's Supper as administered by the church. (See Article III, Section 2.)

### **Section 5: Termination of Membership**

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death of the member.
2. Transfer to another church.
3. Exclusion by action of this church.
4. At the request of the member.
5. Erasure when, if two years after moving away from the area, membership has not been transferred to another church (point 2 above) and no forwarding address is available to ask the member if they want to terminate their membership (point 4 above).

Items 2, 3, and 5 shall require a vote of the church.

### **Section 6: Discipline**

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and elders are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should a serious sin condition exist within the church, the pastor and the elders will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote by ballot of the members present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. At least two week's notice shall be provided before any vote to exclude a person from membership.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded upon request of the excluded person and by majority vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

## **Article II: Congregational Service**

### **Section 1: Eligibility for Service**

Service in the Kingdom of God is a requirement of all believers. Although this service can and should occur, in part, outside of the formal ministry of the local church, it is also true that service within the ministries of the local church is an integral part of a believer's life as well. Service in the church allows for training, accountability, and synergy to occur in a believer's ministry. Given this fact, all individuals who have professed Jesus Christ as their personal savior and Lord, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have signed a statement of agreement with the doctrines and practice of Grass Valley Baptist Church shall be eligible for service in the church. Church membership shall not be a requirement of service except for

those serving as Church Officers (See Article II, Section 6A), ministry heads, or members of a Business Committee (See Article II, Section 6B.3).

There are portions of scripture for which the interpretation of how those verses should be applied is debatable. Two different interpretations may be valid but only one can be applied to a particular church setting. In these situations, an interpretation must be chosen that is faithful to the full counsel of Scripture and that preserves the unity of the Body. One of these situations regards the role of women in the church. In 1 Timothy 2:12-14, Paul states that he does not allow a woman to teach or have authority over a man. Additionally, Paul's tying of this admonition to Adam and Eve and the clear principle of male headship in the home makes it clear that this practice cannot be disregarded as applying only to the time and place of Paul's writing. However, given the other examples of women holding authority over a man, teaching a man, or otherwise serving in the church, Grass Valley Baptist Church makes the following interpretation and sets the following policies:

- Just as Priscilla, alongside her husband Aquila, taught Apollos (Acts 18:26), a woman can teach men alongside her husband. A woman will not be allowed to teach a class which includes adult men as a co-teacher with another man who is not her husband or by herself.
- Paul's restriction on women teaching men will be interpreted as applying to adult men, not boys or males in general. Since the definition of when a boy becomes a man varies in our culture, we will join Jewish custom in viewing a man as a boy who has reached the age of twelve (12). Thus a woman can, without restriction, teach boys up through sixth grade. Beginning in seventh grade, the policies of the previous point will apply.
- The authority Paul described was a spiritual authority, not an administrative one. Thus women shall not serve as elders, pastors, or deacons of the church but are free to serve in all other types of leadership position in the church under the authority of the pastor and elders. This includes a position where she may have some level of administrative authority over a man. Additionally, a woman shall not preach at Grass Valley Baptist Church.

## **Section 2: Selection**

Except when stated otherwise in this document, ...

- all church officers, committee members, ministry heads, and Sunday School or Bible study teachers shall be voted into office by the congregation at a business meeting of the church. Individuals who are asked to advise a ministry or committee or to help conduct the tasks of a ministry or committee but who do not hold official leadership positions do not have to be voted on by the congregation.
- the nominating committee shall be asked to help recruit and nominate persons for service in all official positions of the church (including their own committee), but additionally, nominations can be made by any member of the church at a business meeting.

The selection of all workers must be in keeping with the policies regarding eligibility for service and terms of service included in this document (See Article II, Sections 1 & 3) as well as the policies for their individual office (See Article II, Sections 6-7).

### **Section 3: Terms of Service**

Unless otherwise stated in this document, the terms of service for all church officers and committee members shall run from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>. Unless otherwise stated in this document, church officers (See Article II, Section 6A.) will serve one year terms. Committee members shall serve three year terms with one or more members of the committee being elected each year. Sunday school teachers and ministry heads shall serve one year terms concurrent with the school year. Should a person vacate a position before his term is expired, his replacement shall be elected to complete the remaining portion of that term.

Individuals may be reelected to consecutive terms of service.

### **Section 4: Sabbath**

The idea of Sabbath is clearly seen throughout Scripture (Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 16:22-30; Exodus 31:12-17; Leviticus 23; Psalm 92; Isaiah 58:13-14; Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:1-11). Sabbath was observed not only on the seventh day (Exodus 20:8-11) but also in the seventh year (Leviticus 25:1-22) and in the fiftieth year (after seven sets of seven years – Leviticus 25:8-17). Sabbath included an emphasis on God and His word (Deuteronomy 31:9-13) and a release from work, debts, and slavery not only for people but for animals and the land as well (Exodus 20:10; Exodus 21:2; Exodus 23:10-13; Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 15). Sabbath rest was so important that if it was not voluntarily taken/given, then God would enforce it himself (Leviticus 26:34-35, 43; 2 Chronicles 36:21).

In the spirit of Sabbath, all church workers will be encouraged, but not required, to take a rest in their seventh year of service.

- For volunteers, this would mean stepping down from a given ministry position after six years of service to explore a new position of service. The elders and other church leadership would be available to help volunteers discover new areas of service, new ways to use their gifts and pursue their passions, and training opportunities to make them more effective should they return to their previous ministry position after their Sabbath year.
- For pastors, adjustments to their ministerial duties would be made to in some way reflect the spirit of Sabbath for a year. This would include some form of continuing education and would include a sabbatical period of three months in which they are away from their duties at Grass Valley Baptist Church. This sabbatical could include some portion of family vacation but would primarily be used for personal restoration, spiritual development, and professional improvement. A plan for the use of the sabbatical would need to be submitted to and approved by the Elders. The three month sabbatical would be considered part of their job duties, and thus they would continue to receive their full pay. Should additional time, beyond three months, be requested by the pastor and/or recommended by the elders, the length and financial terms must be approved by the congregation.
- For paid staff members, they would receive some form of continuing education and would be away from their duties at Grass Valley Baptist Church for a period of one month. The objective of this period would be the same as that of the pastors. The plan for the use of this time would be submitted to and approved by the Senior Pastor

or his designee. The one month sabbatical would be considered part of their job duties, and thus they would continue to receive their full pay. Should additional time, beyond one month, be requested by the staff member and/or recommended by the Senior Pastor, or his designee, the length and financial terms must be approved by the congregation.

The plans for sabbaticals for pastors and staff must be approved and requests for training for volunteers must be submitted to the Stewardship Committee in time for them to consider the full ramifications upon the budget and to include these for congregational approval in the appropriate year's budget.

### **Section 5: Specialization of Ministry**

In an effort to ensure that all jobs are done with excellence, individuals shall be discouraged from serving in more than two full time volunteer positions in the church at a time. "Full time volunteer positions" shall be defined as those requiring work to be done at least monthly throughout the year.

### **Section 6: Church Officers and Committees**

#### **A. Church Officers**

The officers of this church shall be the elders, the pastor, the church staff, the deacons, a moderator, a clerk, a treasurer, a financial secretary, and trustees.

#### **1. Elders**

The elders are the church's spiritual leaders (overseers). They live lives described by 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, and are selected by the congregation. The descriptions given in these verses shall be viewed as standards of an elder's life rather than qualifications for service. The elder body will consist of the pastor(s) and other men whose lives fulfill these standards and exemplify Christ. The elder body shall be a minimum of three men and a maximum of seven, the majority of whom are not in the regular pay of the church.

Subject to the will of the church membership, the elders shall oversee the ministry of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine in keeping with Scripture), and shepherding Grass Valley Baptist Church. Elders will meet at least once a month to pray together, seek God's will for the church, discuss relevant issues regarding the church, and consider courses of action that will benefit the body of Grass Valley Baptist Church and further the Kingdom of God.

Their responsibilities include:

- i. Oversee the spiritual health and well-being of the church.
- ii. Ensure a balanced and effective approach to ministry.
- iii. Provide leadership that allows the church to fulfill its primary vision while adhering to sound biblical doctrine.
- iv. Facilitate healthy communication within the body of the church.
- v. Provide Biblical counsel and support to members of the congregation and

- community.
- vi. Oversee church discipline and conflict resolution.
  - vii. Pray for the sick.
  - viii. Ensure adherence to the constitution and by-laws of Grass Valley Baptist Church.

#### Selection of Elders

The Bible teaches that the church needs to conduct a careful investigation to see if a man's life falls within Biblical guidelines. In addition to those guidelines, the elders shall have been members of Grass Valley Baptist Church for at least two years. The following procedures shall be observed in the selection process. By the August member's meeting each year, a list of all men over the age of 21 who have been members of the church for at least two years shall be provided to the congregation. Recommendations to the office of elder from that list may be made by any active attendee of the church to the pastor or active elders. The Elders will prayerfully seek God's will for the church concerning the nominations and place before the church, at the October member's meeting, tentative nominations of those deemed called and who are willing to serve in the office of elder. Anyone, being aware of a valid potential objection based on a violation of the Biblical standards of elders, should submit a written notice to this effect to the pastor or active elders. Church members will be provided biographical information and a witness statement by an active elder or the pastor prior to the vote. A printed ballot will be provided to facilitate a vote by church members for each candidate to the office of elder. A candidate must receive affirmative votes on three-fourths of the ballots (abstention votes not counting) in order to be called as an Elder. The voting shall take place in November of each year.

Should the failure to elect some or all of the elder nominees result in the total number of elders being less than three or the number of elders in the regular pay of the church being equal to or greater than the number of elders not in the regular pay of the church, then the elder selection process shall restart immediately so that the proper ratio of elders is restored within three months.

#### Term of Service

An elder may serve a three year term with approximately one third of the body rotating off each year. An elder may serve consecutive terms at the discretion of the congregation.

#### Termination and Replacement of an Elder

An elder's tenure in office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Action to dismiss an elder shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least two weeks' public notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon recommendation of a majority of the other elders or by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the resident church members. The vote to dismiss an elder shall be by secret ballot; an affirmative vote of two-thirds being necessary to dismiss the elder.

At such time as an elder's tenure in office is terminated, the church may choose to immediately begin the process to replace him but is not required to do so unless his termination brought the total number of elders to less than three or brought the number of elders in the regular pay of the church to a number equal to or greater than the number of elders who are not in the regular pay of the church. If either of these criteria is brought out of line, the elder selection process shall begin immediately so that the proper ratio of elders is restored within six months. If the process to replace an elder is begun immediately, the process shall be the same as the normal process described above excepting the months of the year in which the steps occur.

## **2. Senior Pastor**

The pastor is responsible for leading the body to function as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks. The pastor shall be a duly licensed and/or ordained minister of the Gospel and meet the standards of an elder given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

The pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such he works with elders and the church staff to:

1. Lead the church in the achievement of its Mission and Vision.
2. Proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers.
3. Care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks' public notice has been given.

A pastor selection committee or pulpit committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. The church shall hear the nominee preach before voting. Election shall be by a ballot of the resident members of the church, an affirmative vote of three-fourths being necessary for a choice. (See Article 1, Section 4, Point 1 for further information on voting.) The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.

The pastor may relinquish the office of pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church at the time of resignation. Additionally the church may declare the office of pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least two weeks' public notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon recommendation of a majority of the personnel committee, if constituted, or the elders or by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the resident church members. If the pastor normally serves as moderator, a new moderator, not related to the pastor, shall be designated for this meeting by the members present by majority vote. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by a secret ballot of the resident members; an affirmative vote of two-thirds being necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the pastor so excluded from office (namely by termination rather than resignation or retirement), the church will compensate the pastor

with not less than one twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

### **3. Ministerial Staff**

The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Those staff members, of whom the church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister, shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and called by church action. Election shall be by a ballot of the resident members of the church, an affirmative vote of three-fourths being necessary for a choice. (See Article 1, Section 4, Point 1 for further information on voting.) The minister, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. At the time of resignation at least two weeks' notice shall be given to the church. The church may vote to vacate such positions upon recommendation of the elders or personnel committee, such termination being the same as for the pastor, except that the severance amount shall relate to the individual's compensation.

### **4. Non-Ministerial Staff**

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The church personnel committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members without church action. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the agreement of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the church.

### **5. Deacons**

In the Greek language of the New Testament, the word "deacon" meant "servant," and where deacons are seen in action in the New Testament (Acts 6:1-6), the word "servant" is a fitting description of them.

In light of the role of deacons, as recorded in Scripture, the church may elect deacons by ballot at regular business meetings of the church, as needed. At such times, a job description shall be drafted and a term of service appropriate to the task(s) assigned shall be defined. Under no circumstances shall a term of service as deacon exceed three years. An individual may be reelected to a new term of service as deacon, within the guidelines of the Sabbath policy (See Article II, Section 4), if the congregation desires. The individuals selected to serve as deacons must meet the standards described in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. As discussed regarding elders above, the verses in 1 Timothy describe standards that an individual's life exemplifies rather than qualifications for service.

### **6. Moderator**

The church shall elect annually a moderator as its presiding officer, and a vice-moderator to preside in the absence of the moderator. In the absence of both, the clerk shall call the meeting to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.

## **7. Clerk**

The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer, and an assistant clerk to help in the clerical tasks and to serve in the clerk's absence. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, transfers, exclusions, death or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary who will assist the elected clerk. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office when an office is maintained. Electronic files are to be backed up to disk or a second computer once a week, this backup being kept at the church.

## **8. Treasurer**

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer as its financial officer, and an assistant treasurer to serve in the treasurer's absence. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to preserve and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid by or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. The Treasurer may keep and process the financial records at home but shall be required to give a back up of the records weekly to the church office. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. An auditing committee, at the pleasure of the church, shall audit the treasurer's report and records. The treasurer may be bonded, the church paying the bond if required by the church or requested by the treasurer.

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

The Stewardship Committee shall develop written policies for the Treasurer to ensure proper accountability and stewardship are maintained.

## **9. Financial Secretary**

The church shall elect annually a church financial secretary and an assistant financial secretary to serve in the financial secretary's absence. The financial secretary shall be responsible for the deposit of all funds received by the church after first recording the amount and source of the funds. The financial secretary shall also be responsible for distributing contributions records after the close of each year. The financial secretary shall ensure that the handling of all funds is done with high levels of accountability and confidentiality and is in keeping with the policies established by the stewardship committee.

## **10. Trustees**

The church shall elect at least three and no more than seven trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any church property. When signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to church-approved matters.

Trustees shall serve three year terms with approximately one third of the trustees being elected each year.

## **B. Church Committees**

### **1. Committee Size and Leadership**

There shall be a minimum of three (3) people and a maximum of seven (7) people on every committee, with five to seven (5-7) committee members being ideal. The chairman of a committee will be elected by its members annually. In order to promote the leadership skills of the members of the committee and new perspectives on committee operation, the chairmanship should change each year.

### **2. Committee Accountability**

In order that the operation of the church may remain above reproach in the sight of outsiders, the following policies shall be followed:

- Members of any committee shall recuse themselves from a decision in which they may have a conflict of interest.
- Committees can continue to function without a majority of its members present but should only do so when time constraints make it necessary. They must then notify the absent committee members immediately of the actions taken.
- All committees shall keep detailed minutes of committee meetings and business. These minutes shall be provided to any absent committee members and to the church clerk within one week.
- Any procedural or personal conflicts on a committee should be brought to the Elders immediately for mediation. If Biblically necessary, the elders have the right to remove a person from a committee.

### **3. Business Committees**

#### **a. Nominating Committee**

The nominating committee coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions by volunteer workers (such as committee members, ministry heads, and Sunday school and preschool workers), unless otherwise specified herein. The nominating committee shall present to the church for election all that accepts the invitation to serve.

#### **b. Personnel Committee**

The personnel committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration, including those called by church action. Their work includes such

areas as making recommendations regarding staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits other than compensation, policies, job descriptions, and personnel services.

c. Stewardship Committee

The stewardship committee develops and recommends an overall stewardship development plan, money handling and spending policies, and a unified church budget. The committee then oversees the budget and works with the elders and staff in implementation of the stewardship development plan and financial policies. The committee advises and recommends in the administration of the monetary and material gifts of church members and others, using sound principles of financial management. It works with the treasurer in the preparation and presentation to the church of required reports regarding the financial affairs of the church.

4. Ministry and Service Committees

a. Property and Space Committee

The church property and space committee oversees the needs of the church in terms of real estate, buildings, furnishings, and vehicles. This committee takes care of the purchase of said items or, when appropriate, makes recommendations to the church regarding said purchases. The committee also makes policy recommendations regarding the use, maintenance, and disposal of church property and space and ensures that the maintenance recommendations are then carried out.

b. Missions Committee

The missions committee shall (in cooperation with the Women's Missionary Union, a.k.a. WMU) research and inform the church of mission opportunities and promote mission projects, mission giving and prayer. The WMU Director and a designated elder or pastor shall be voting ex officio members. The ex officio members will not serve as committee chairman.

c. Service Committee

The service committee oversees the planning and execution of fellowship and special events for the church, including keeping the kitchen stocked with supplies. In addition, the service committee helps to provide cards, flowers, and meals for those within the congregation and community with family crises and special circumstances. Upon request, the committee may provide meals for meetings at the church.

d. Benevolence Committee

The benevolence committee facilitates the collection and distribution of resources (financial, material, and spiritual) to those in need in the church and community. The committee shall be composed of two members from the Stewardship Committee, two members from the Service Committee, and one elder. The pastors shall be ex officio members. The Stewardship and Service Committees and the board of Elders shall determine which members of their committees/board shall serve on Benevolence.

## 5. Additional Committees

Other business committees and ministry and service committees of both a permanent and temporary nature shall be activated when the church feels a need for their services. These committees may be added by the amendment procedure prescribed within these bylaws.

## **Section 7: Church Program Organizations**

The church should maintain programs of Bible teaching, discipleship training, church leader training, new member orientation, mission education, action and support; worship leadership, and other education, training and ministries that support the Mission and Vision of the church. All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all program activities subject to church coordination and approval. The church will strive to provide the human, physical, and financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

### **A. Sunday School**

The Sunday school shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching program. Its tasks shall be to teach the biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, and lead the Bible teaching function of the church within its constituency. The Sunday school shall be organized by departments and/or classes, as appropriate for all ages and shall be conducted under the direction of a church-elected Sunday school director and the Elders.

### **B. Discipleship Training**

The Discipleship Training organization shall serve as the training unit of the church. Its tasks shall be to train individuals to perform the functions of the church and to meet the Mission and Vision of the church, such as: train church leaders, orient new church members, and teach Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history, and polity regarding the work of the church and denomination. Church training shall be conducted under the direction of a Discipleship Training Director and the Elders.

### **C. Women's Missionary Union**

Women's Missionary Union shall be the mission education, mission action, and mission support organization of the church for women, girls, and preschool children. Its tasks shall be to teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through praying and giving, and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination. Women's Missionary Union shall have officers and organizations as the program requires. The WMU Director shall be a voting ex officio member of the Missions Committee.

### **D. Worship Team**

The Worship Team, under the direction of the church-elected music director and pastors, shall be the music education, training, and performance organization of the church. Its task shall be to lead the congregation in worship; coordinate and/or train persons to lead, sing, and play music; and provide music in the church and community. The Worship Team shall have such officers and organization as the program requires.

## **Section 8: Ministry Coordination Council**

The Ministry Coordination Council shall be comprised of the chairpersons of each committee, leaders of each ministry and, when functioning, the chairman of the deacons. The Ministry Coordination Council shall meet at least once a quarter in order to coordinate and schedule activities of the congregation in counsel with the Elders. The Ministry Coordination Council will ensure these ministry actions are communicated effectively to the entire congregation.

## **Article III: Church Ordinances**

### **Section 1: Baptism**

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
2. The pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The worship team shall assist in the preparation for and the observance of baptism.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.
4. A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff or elders.

### **Section 2: The Lord's Supper**

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly. The pastor or, in his absence, an elder shall administer the Lord's Supper. The worship team shall be responsible for the physical preparations. Participation in the Lord's Supper shall be open to anyone who confesses Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

## **Article IV: Church Meetings**

### **Section 1: Worship Services**

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, and additional days and times as agreed to by processes outlined within this document for worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, discipleship, missions, fellowship and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. A member of the pastoral staff, or his designee, shall direct the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

### **Section 2: Special Services**

All special services and other uses of the church building and/or equipment shall be approved by the leader of the appropriate ministry, committee or other church group. These meetings may require approval of the Ministry Coordination Council and/or elders, or a vote at a business meeting as the size and impact of these meetings increase. The dates and times of these services must be communicated to the church office and other leaders so as to avoid scheduling conflicts.

**Section 3: Regular Business Meetings**

The church shall hold regular business meetings on a designated day and time and shall be placed on the church calendar. The frequency, dates and times of regular business meetings shall be set by a majority vote at a business meeting.

**Section 4: Special Business Meetings**

The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A two-week notice must be given for the special called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the data, and the time and place, and it must be given in such a manner that resident members have reasonable opportunity to know of the meeting.

**Section 5: Quorum**

The quorum for a regularly scheduled business meeting consists of those members who attend the business meeting. In the case of a special called business meeting, fifteen percent (15%) of the resident church membership shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 6: Parliamentary Rules**

Robert's Rules of Order, latest revised edition, will be a guide for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church but alterations can be made as necessary to promote Christian unity.

**Article V: Church Finances**

**Section 1: Budget**

Each year the stewardship committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval a budget which itemizes the anticipated expenditures of each of the various ministries of the church. Budget items may not be exceeded without church approval in a business meeting.

It is understood that membership in God's Church involves a financial obligation to support the Church, both globally and locally, and its causes with regular, proportionate tithes and offerings. Opportunities shall be provided to secure worthy commitments of financial support from the church members for regular and special giving. Offering envelopes may be provided for congregational use.

**Section 2: Accounting Procedures**

All funds received for any and all purposes shall be counted and given to the church financial secretary for deposit. The church financial secretary will be responsible for keeping records of the amounts given by every individual and at the end of each year shall report to them, for their personal tax records, the total amount given. Once deposited, all funds will pass through the hands of the church treasurer, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. Those who have responsibility that involves actual handling of funds may be required to be bonded, the church paying the bond whether required by the church or requested by the officer. (See Article II, Section 6A.8-9 regarding the church treasurer and financial secretary.)

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the stewardship committee.

**Section 3: Fiscal Year**

The church fiscal year shall run concurrently with the calendar year.

**Article VI: Church Operations Manual**

When determined to be necessary, a church operations manual shall be developed which includes church policies, procedures, and organizational charts depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the church. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available upon request. The church secretary shall maintain the manual. A special committee shall review the manual on a regular basis, with authority to recommend changes for the church to consider. Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual.

Addition, revision or deletion of church policies requires:

1. The recommendation of the church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the policy relates,
2. Discussion by the Ministry Coordination Council, and
3. Approval by the church.

**Article VII: Dissolution**

Upon the winding up and dissolution of this corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the corporation, the remaining assets shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation or corporation, which is organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes in agreement with the church's Statement of Basic Beliefs (See Constitution Article III.) and which has established its tax-exempt status under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to or for the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distribution in furtherance of the exempt purposes for which it was formed.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under section (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

**Article VIII: Amendments**

Changes in the constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting provided the church supplies members with copies of the proposed amendment at or before the preceding business meeting. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds vote

of the church members present. Amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.