

**Constitution and  
By-Laws of the  
Leon Valley Baptist Church**

## **REVISIONS**

**ARTICLE III, Section 1, paragraph a) – November 25, 2007**

**ARTICLE III, Added Section 5 – Special Elections – November 25, 2007**

**Added Revisions page inside front cover reflecting revision date and item number(s) added or changed – November 25, 2007**

**Comprehensive Review and Rewrite – February 12, 2021**

Tithing (Do you tithe regularly?)

Visitation program

Church music

Are you in agreement in any way with the Ecumenical movement?

# Attachment A

## PASTORAL CANDIDATE INQUIRY FORM

Name:

Date of Birth:

Family:

Marriage Date:

Have you ever been married before? If yes, then explain.

Wife's Name and Date of birth:

Children: names, birthdays, and present age(s):

Testimony of Salvation:

Educational Background:

High School: Yes No

GED: Yes No

Other (schools and degrees):

Prior Christian Service(s):

Testimony as to Your Call to Preach:

Are you in agreement with our Articles of faith?

Explain your view on missions.

Explain your convictions on the following:

Tobacco

Alcoholic beverages

Dance

Dress and appearance

Church attendance

# Constitution

## **ARTICLE I – LEON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH OF SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR COUNTY TEXAS, INCORPORATED**

### **ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

This church, believing in the Bible as the inspired Word of God and as the SOLE authority for faith and practice, declares its purpose:

- a) To maintain regular services for public worship;
- b) To proclaim earnestly the Gospel message and to urge its personal acceptance, both privately and publicly;
- c) To cooperate heartily, by prayer, giving and service, in the effort of seeing the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached throughout the world;
- d) To pray for one another that we may ever live according to the will of God, as revealed in His Word;
- e) To promote Christian fellowship and friendship.

This church will teach and preach the truths generally as the Baptists through the years have taught, i.e.:

- a) The sufficiency and supremacy of the Bible in all things pertaining to faith and practice;
- b) The autonomy of the local church;
- c) A regenerate and baptized membership;
- d) The priesthood of every believer;
- e) The separation of church and state.

### **ARTICLE III - CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and on the profession of our faith of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most 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, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to

contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks, drugs, pornography; 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 each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rule 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 a church of like faith where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **ARTICLE IV - ARTICLES OF FAITH**

A fundamental Baptist is one who believes in a supernatural Bible which tells of a supernatural Christ, Who had a supernatural birth, Who spoke supernatural words, Who performed supernatural miracles, Who lived a supernatural life, Who died a supernatural death, Who rose in supernatural splendor, Who intercedes as a supernatural priest, and Who will one day return in supernatural glory to establish a supernatural kingdom on the earth.

### **Of the Scriptures**

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired; that it has truth without any error or contradiction and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; that it is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

a) By "The Holy Bible," we mean that collection of sixty-six books from Genesis to Revelation that, as originally written, does not only contain and convey the word of God, but IS the very Word of God.

acceptance; provided, however, that in the meantime, members of the church have been duly informed of the proposed amendment. At no time can any amendment be adopted that would be contrary to the clear teachings of the Scriptures and to historic Baptist beliefs and practices. Constitution Articles II, III, IV, may not be amended at any time or under any conditions for the purpose of changing the doctrine or setting a doctrine aside. However, additions may be made to clarify our position or to protect the church from false teachers.

- f) Must have a real desire to teach.
- g) Must have been Scripturally baptized.
- h) Must be a member of this church in good standing.

Explanation: The convictions listed are those held by this church and are ones, which are felt to be Bible-based. Unless teachers and officers hold to these standards, a "double standard" exists, which is church hypocrisy.

- a) Tobacco - it is habit forming, thus allowing our body to be under the controlling power of a worldly device. It defiles our body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, thus grieving the Holy Spirit, which is sin.
- b) Drinking alcoholic beverages - the evils of alcohol are openly apparent. Many Scriptures warn us about the use of alcohol.
- c) Dancing - the modern dance, for the most part, is accompanied by influences which are basically immoral. Much immorality has resulted from the dance. The dance in itself is of a sexual nature. The music used at most dances is definitely anti-Christian.
- d) Profanity - **Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth."**
- e) Dress - the public dress of those who hold offices must be that which is becoming of a Christian.

As teachers, officers and church staff members, we must keep from being a stumbling block. Our attitude should be that of **Romans 14:21, "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended or is made weak."** At times, to be true to this verse means **self-denial**; but is that not exactly what Jesus taught in **Matthew 16:24 "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me"**? The question is - "Do we want Christianity without price and without power, or do we want true Bible discipleship?"

## ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws may be introduced in writing through formal motion at any business meeting, but shall not be acted upon by the church until a later business meeting. At such time, an affirmative 75% vote of a special quorum shall be required for

b) By "inspiration," we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or will ever be inspired.

**II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21; Psalm 119:105, 160; Revelation 22:19.**

### Of the True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of Heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

**Genesis 1:1, 25, 17:1; Exodus 20:2-3; Jeremiah 10:10; John 1:1; I Timothy 3:16**

### Of the Lord Jesus Christ

We believe in the deity and virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ; that He was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, not having human father, sinless in His life and is true God and true man; that He is man's only hope of salvation from sin, being the only mediator between God and man; that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day for our sins according to the Scriptures, that His return for His Church (the Body of Christ), which He will take with Himself into Heaven, is imminent and pretribulational; that He will return to this earth after the tribulation period to set up His millennial reign.

**Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:35; John 10:30, 14:6; I Cor. 15:1-8; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Timothy 2:5-6; Revelation 20:4-6.**

### Of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, equal with the Father and the Son and of the same substance. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the true God; and that He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment; bears witness to the Truth; is the agent of the new birth; and that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses to, sanctifies, and helps the believer; that He takes up His abode within the individual at the time of regeneration, and thus indwells every born-again believer; that He fills the believer for service upon each experience of surrender and dedication.

We believe that the Holy Spirit testifies concerning Jesus Christ and never leads any person at any time contrary to the teaching of the Bible. **John 3:5-6; 14:26; 16:7-11; Acts 5:1-4;**

We declare ourselves opposed to the "gifts of the Spirit" as exercised in the charismatic movement (also known as the Pentecostal movement), particularly the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" and the speaking in tongues. In addition, we resist the notion of "divine healing" as practiced by the modern day healers.

We insist that the speaking in tongues was a special gift for the early apostolic church, and this special gift is not needed in our time. **I Cor. 13:8; Acts 2:6.**

We also maintain that God does not promise to heal everyone who is physically or mentally ill.

We recognize His power to heal the ill and infirm but realize that healing is based on His divine will. **II Cor. 12:7.**

### **Of the Devil, or Satan**

We believe that Satan was once holy and enjoyed Heavenly honors but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a great host of angels; that he is now the malignant prince of the power of the air and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions; the chief power back to the present apostasy; the lord of the antichrist, and the author of all the powers of darkness - destined, however, to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

**Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:14-17; Matt. 4:1-3, 25:41; John 14:30; Ephesians 2:2; Rev. 20:1-3, 10**

### **Of Creation**

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was made directly and God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their

## **ARTICLE V - FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PASTOR**

**I Cor. 9:6-14 and I Tim. 5:17-18.** Let it be understood that the Scriptures teach that a church should take care of the pastor in as good a way as possible. Also let it be understood that many times there are expenses a pastor has that never meet the eye.

- a) Salary - should be at least (as the church is able) as much as the average salary of the people of the church.
- b) Benefits - as determined by the church (to include any/all separation compensation and/or retirement benefits. Such are spelled out in separate documentation.

## **ARTICLE VI - PASTORAL LIBERTY**

- a) Financial: The pastor shall have liberty to direct the everyday affairs of the church as they arrive and as he sees fit. On matters such as building, purchasing or selling vehicles, and matters that involve \$1500 or more, the church shall have a right to vote.
- b) Preaching: Never shall the church seek to direct his preaching. The pastor also has liberty to invite guests to preach or fill the pulpit in his absence at his own discretion.
- c) Outside Preaching: The church should be willing to share their pastor with other churches from time to time. When opportunities to preach revivals are present, the pastor has the liberty as the Lord leads to accept the invitation.

## **ARTICLE VII - TEACHER AND OFFICER AND CHURCH STAFF MEMBER REQUIREMENTS**

The following are requirements for those holding the positions of teacher, officer, or church staff member:

- a) Must be born again by the Spirit of God.
- b) Must attend all church services unless sick, working or otherwise hindered.
- c) Must seek to regularly be involved in Evangelism.
- d) Must set the example in tithing.
- e) Must be an example in daily life: no tobacco, no drinking, no dancing, no profane language or suggestive stories; dress habits must be modest and above reproach.

a trustee. This allows for some, none, or all nominees to be elected during special elections.

b) Special Elections for Deacons:

1) Following notification of the existing need, qualified and willing candidates will be identified and presented to the church for a period of prayer and observation lasting a minimum of two months. The election date may be announced at the earliest opportunity for the most appropriate session following conclusion of the observation period.

2) After the two-month period of observation, the special election will be held. The ES will ensure that the number of men nominated is commensurate with the needs of the church according to guidelines set forth in ARTICLE III, Section 4 of this By Law. Ballots will list all nominated men with a "Yes" and corresponding "No" vote per individual. Each man receiving at least 75 percent of "Yes" votes will be installed as a deacon.

3) In a Special Election, the months previously prescribed for initial contact, observation period, and voting does not apply. It will be the responsibility of the ES to ensure that this process is completed within a reasonable time and to establish milestone dates for holding special elections.

## ARTICLE IV - MISSIONS

The mission endeavor of the church will be to evangelize the world. ***An annual missions conference will be held on a date designated by the pastor.*** A missions budget will be presented at the annual business meeting. ***Missionaries considered for support will be selected by the pastor, assisted by the Executive Staff or those appointed by the Executive Staff as a missions committee. These will be presented to the church during the annual business meetings for approval.*** The pastor, operating within ***approved annual*** budget, will be free to designate ***periodic special or emergency help to individual*** missionaries or projects as he is led by the Holy Spirit ***within the constraints of the pastoral liberty clause. In most cases, projects which do not demand immediate attention need to be brought before the church for approval.***

kind." **Genesis 1:1-2, 25; Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3.**

### Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but of choice; and therefore, under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

**Genesis 3:1-6; John 3:18, 36; Romans 3:10, 5:12.**

### Of the Atonement for Sin

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust; Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that, having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven. **Isaiah 53; John 3:16; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:14, 7:25; I Peter 2:24, 3:10; I John 2:2, 4:10.**

### Of Grace in the New Creation

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sin is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, not by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life. **John 1:12-13, 3:3-7; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13; II Cor. 5:17; II Peter 1:4; I John 5:1**

## Of Justification

We believe 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 gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed unto us.

**Acts 13:39; Romans 4:1-8, 5:1, 8:1; Titus 3:5-7.**

*We reject the "Hyper-Calvinist" view, which says, "God predestines individuals to Heaven or Hell." We believe this is a mere concession to the issue of "double predestination." The very act of choosing eternal life automatically excludes those who were not chosen. God does not "choose" or "will" that individuals should go to Hell.*

*II Pet. 3:9; I Tim. 2:4; Rev. 22:17.*

## Of Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplication for mercy, confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.

**Mark 1:15; Luke 18:13; Acts 2:37-38, 20:21; Romans 10:9-13.**

## Of the Church

We believe that a Baptist Church is a congregation of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, said church being understood to be the citadel and propagator of the Divine and Eternal Grace; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by the laws; exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers of ordination are pastors or elders whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures.

We believe the true mission of the church is found in the Great Commission: **first**, to make individual disciples; **second**, to build up the church; **third**, to teach and instruct as He has commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order; we hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is Scriptural for the true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith

3) After being interviewed and qualified, the Pastor will formally present deacon candidates to the church in October and the membership will be given the months of October, November and December to watch the candidates to determine their worthiness to serve as deacon.

4) Newly elected deacons will be presented to the church in a formal ceremony and commissioned to serve in that capacity. The timing of the ceremony will be determined by the pastor, but should be as soon as possible after election takes place.

g) The number of deacon candidates presented to the church during regular elections will be at least one more than the number required (i.e. if one deacon is needed then two or more candidates will be presented). The church will vote on the deacon candidates *in January*, and by secret, written ballot, select their choice of deacons (s) for the next term. The presiding Trustees shall receive and count the ballots of the deacon election. Those candidate(s) having the most votes will serve as deacons for the next term. *A formal ceremony will be held whereby new deacons will be presented to the church and commissioned to serve in that capacity. To avoid the possibility of having an entirely new set of deacons, an election will be held every two years during the month of January. A "Chairman of the Deacons" shall be chosen by the deacons each time there is an election for deacons. The Chairman will call and lead out in deacon's meetings.*

## Section 5 – Special Elections for Officers and Committees

The church will be notified as soon as possible whenever the need to add or replace trustees and/or deacons arises. The term of service for trustees or deacons elected during any special elections shall end at the same time as the terms of the most recently elected members of their perspective group.

a) Special Elections for Trustees:

No specific period of observation is necessary. Ensure requirements of Section 1 are met and proceed with the nomination and voting as soon as an election date is set. Special election ballots will list all nominated men with a "Yes" and a corresponding "No" vote per individual. Each nominee receiving at least 75 percent of "Yes" votes will be installed as



circumstances). At the end of each four-year period, if the man remains qualified and is willing, he will be presented to the congregation for a vote of confidence for continuance. If approved, he will commit to another four-year term of active service.

2) Should a man determine that he is no longer able or willing to serve, he may resign from active service as a deacon. Should the circumstances of his decision be other than disqualifying actions, he may be considered for return to active deacon at a later time. Reinstatement shall require consideration by the Pastoral and Executive Staffs, and requires a vote by the congregation.

3) Should a man no longer meet established qualifications, his testimony prove him ineligible to continue, or demonstrates an unwilling or uncooperative spirit, he shall be presented to the congregation in a special business meeting for a vote of removal. The Pastoral and Executive Staffs will determine if there is a need to reinstate an inactive deacon or to seek election of an additional man to meet the needs of the church.

4) The pastor will provide oversight of the deacon body and the Executive Staff will respond to such recommendations as he may present.

f) The example in **Acts 6** will be followed in choosing deacons.

1) The pastor and deacon body shall determine the total number of deacons required to meet church needs, and the Pastor and Executive Staff shall seek out men who meet the qualifications of deacons, as set forth in 1 Tim 3. It is equally important to consider the testimony of the potential candidate's wife, as she will aid her husband in his ministry. These men will be watched without their knowledge during the months of July, August and September so as to avoid a "performance". The church membership may make recommendations to the Executive Staff for consideration prior to the month of July. In September, the church membership will be informed that new deacons will be voted on in December.

2) With the approval of the Pastor, the presiding deacons shall then interview and evaluate each candidate based on the individual's church duties, responsibilities, and participation in church activities and ministries; and qualify potential candidates.

and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; on all matters of membership, of policy, of government of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

**Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42, 14:23; I Cor. 5:11-13, 6:1-3, 16:1-2; II Cor. 8:23-24; Eph. 4:11-12; I Timothy 1-13; 1 Peter 5:1-4.**

## **Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

**Baptism and participation in the Lord's Supper are acts of obedience, and NOT conditions of salvation, according to the Word of God.** We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local church, 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; that it is prerequisite to the privilege of a church relation and to the Lord's supper; in which believers, by the sacred use of bread and the fruit of the vine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination. *In the rare event that one has been saved and is ready for baptism but has not been given an opportunity to be baptized, they may participate in the Lord's Supper.* **Matthew 3:16, 28:19; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42, 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5; I Cor. 11:23-28.**

## **Of the Perseverance of the Saints**

We believe that such only are real believers as 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 that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation. **John 8:31-32, 10:28-29; Romans 8:28-39; Phil. 1:6; Col. 1:21-23; I Peter 1:15; I John 2:19.**

## **Of the Righteous and the Wicked**

We believe 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 unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse, and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. **Malachi 3:18; Romans 6:17-23; Matt. 7:13-14; 25:34, 41; Luke 16:19-31.**

## Of Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good of human society; 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 coming Prince of the kings of the earth.

We believe that every human being is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and autonomous and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore church and state must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from the dictation or patronage of the other.

**Romans 13:1-7; Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1, I Peter 2:17; Acts 4:19-20; Acts 5:29; Daniel 3:17-18.**

## Of False Doctrines

We believe in the total and complete separation as taught in the Word of God from all forms of heresy and ecclesiastical apostasy. We believe the Scriptures teach that the Church is to: (1) try them, (2) mark them, (3) rebuke them, (4) have no fellowship with them, (5) withdraw ourselves from them, (6) receive them not, (7) have no company with them, (8) reject them, and (9) separate itself from them.

**I John 4:1; Rom. 16:17; Titus 1:13; Eph. 5:11; II Thess. 3:16; II John 10, 11; II Thess. 3:14; II Cor. 6:17.**

## Of Missions

The command to give the Gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable, and this Commission was given to the churches.

**Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Rom. 10:13:15.**

## Of the Grace of Giving

Scriptural giving is one of the fundamentals of the faith. We are commanded to bring our gifts into the storehouse (common treasury of the church) upon the first day of the week. We are commanded to bring the tithe into the common treasury of the church. **II Cor. 8:7; I Cor. 16:2; Mal. 3:10.**

upon the qualifications of a deacon as a pastor, and since a good deacon is a peculiar blessing both to the pastor and to the church, the office of deacon is considered a privileged responsibility.

b) Realizing that the Scriptural term "deacon" comes from a word also translated "servant" and "Minister" with the meaning of laborer or helper, and also realizing that the Bible gives only the qualifications for the office, it follows that the duties must be designated by the church to meet its various needs. The Biblical qualifications found in **I Timothy 3:8-13** shall be followed.

c) The minimum number of deacons shall be three, regardless of congregational membership. The total number of active deacons should be sufficient to serving 20-25 family units, per deacon.

d) The duties of deacons will include:

- 1) Assisting in the Lord's Supper;
- 2) Serving on the Executive Staff;
- 3) Handling requests for benevolence assistance;
- 4) Being responsible for an equal number of church families to:
  - a. contact them at random times without specific reasons;
  - b. be available when they need assistance, prayer or encouragement;
  - c. check on those who miss coming to church;
  - d. Conduct hospital and home visits as situations dictate.
- 5) Being visibly involved in major church events;
- 6) Assisting the pastor in dealing with issues of church discipline;
- 7) Carrying out other services which the pastor may assign them; and,
- 8) Providing a Family Care Ministry update at Executive Staff Meetings, or at another time to the Pastoral Staff

e) The Bible does not indicate that a deacon is allowed to serve only for a limited time. Further, societal practices make it increasingly difficult to find qualified men. Therefore, deacons will be elected without expectation of automatically having to step down from service, as long as they remain qualified, are willing, and hold the trust of the congregation. With this in mind:

- 1) Once elected, a deacon will commit to serving in an active status for a minimum of four years (barring unforeseen

matters that receive a majority vote of 51% by the Executive Staff members. The one exception to this rule is a recommendation to dissolve the pastoral relationship, which requires a unanimous vote.

- d) The church membership has the final vote in all matters.
- e) In the calling of a pastor, the church shall elect one of the Executive Staff to serve as moderator until a pastor is called.
- f) When the church is without a pastor, and during the time the Executive Staff is seeking a pastor, the moderator shall be responsible to see that the pulpit is filled for each service.

### **Section 3** - The Church Treasurer(s)

*The treasurer(s) will be appointed by the pastor. The Executive Staff will act in an advisory role by providing recommendations of qualified individuals. The treasurer(s) will serve an initial five-year period, and may be reappointed at the discretion of the Executive Staff, as long as the Treasurer remains qualified, willing, and able.*

The responsibilities of the treasurer(s) shall be:

- a) To count and record all offerings. (A member of The Executive Staff will be present when the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are counting the money.)
- b) To prepare and make bank deposits.
- c) To maintain an accurate record of all church finances.
- d) To prepare monthly and yearly financial reports.
- e) To maintain contribution records for all members.
- f) To oversee payment of all church bills and dispersal of money according to budgeted items.

The treasurer has no authority to spend any money or decide on any **expenditure** without authorization from the pastor or the church (the church having considered the matter and voted approvingly).

### **Section 4** - Deacons

- a) Inasmuch as the New Testament places as much importance

## **ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1** - Church Membership and the Word of God

It is the prayerful desire of this church to follow the simple Scriptural procedure concerning church membership as outlined in Acts 2:40-47, i.e., the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, salvation by faith, baptism, church membership, and the Lord's Supper.

### **Section 2** - Purpose of Membership

The purpose of church membership is three-fold:

- a) Identification:
  - 1) With body of believers;
  - 2) With a set statement of faith and doctrine
- b) Service (that is, to serve God through the local assembly);
- c) Fellowship with other believers.

### **Section 3** - Grounds upon Which Membership May be Established

- a) By profession and baptism. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, giving evidence of regeneration, and adopting the views of faith and practice as set forth in the church Constitution may, upon baptism by immersion, be received into full church membership.
- b) By experience. A believer of worthy Christian character, who has formerly been saved and Scripturally baptized, who is in accord with the views of faith and practice of this church, may be received upon statement of faith or by transfer of letter.
- c) By restoration. Any member *whose membership has been terminated* for any reason and shown fruit of repentance may be restored to membership upon the recommendation of the pastor. *Any member who has been placed on the "inactive" list may be restored by presenting them self to the church to become again an "active" member.*

### **Section 4** - Application and Procedure

Each candidate for church membership shall publicly confess Christ as Savior and indicate his desire for church membership by responding to an invitation at the close of any church service.

## Section 5 - Grounds upon Which Membership May be Terminated

- a) Transfer of membership to other churches. A letter of commendation to any other church of like precious faith may be granted upon request. Such a letter shall be sent only to a requesting church.
- b) Voluntary withdrawal. If a member of the church desires that his name be removed from the membership roll of the church, his request may be presented to the pastor. If a member expresses their desire to a deacon or any other member of the Executive Staff, that staff member should strongly recommend the member speak with the pastor first. In any case, the staff member will notify the pastor of the member's intent. If a member of the church joins any other church without request for a letter, his membership in this church will automatically cease.
- c) Discipline by the church, as spelled out in Article VI.

## Section 6 - Standing of Members

A member who does not attend and who, for no known reason, does not communicate with the church for a period of six months shall be listed by the church as inactive. A member's name shall not be placed on the inactive list until after a conscientious effort has been made to renew the interest of the member, and, if possible, he has been notified by mail. ***If a person moves out of the area and we receive no notification they have joined another church, the move out of this area prohibits them from being "active" and therefore they shall be considered "inactive."*** An inactive member shall not have the privilege of voting in any of the church business meetings until he has been restored to full active membership. If no response has been received after 12 months of consistent effort, the responsible deacon will make a recommendation to the Executive Staff that the member be removed from the church rolls.

### Exception Clause for Section 6

If a member is physically unable to attend services but continues to keep in contact with the church and prayerfully support it, then the above section will not apply.

the office of Trustee.

d) It shall be the duty of the Trustee Subcommittee to represent the church in certain legal matters as required by law, and to hold in trust the property of the church. Trustees are not to be considered a board of directors. They have no authority to buy, sell, lease, mortgage, or transfer any property without the specific instructions of the church authorizing such action. Their duties shall include:

- 1) Signing legal documents on behalf of the church
- 2) Researching proposals and coordinating contracts for work (e.g. plumbing, electrical, landscaping, etc.)
- 3) Conducting annual review of insurance and other contracts
- 4) Reviewing the financial status of the church every three months with the Treasurer. When deemed appropriate, based on unforeseen factors, they will make recommendations to the Executive Staff for adjustments to the budget. Changes to the budget must be approved by the church after a majority vote of support by the Executive Staff.

## Section 2 - The Executive Staff

The Executive Staff, moderated by the pastor, shall be the organizing and advisory board of the church. This committee shall not meet without the pastor except for calling a new pastor. ***Except in rare circumstances, a meeting of the Executive Staff will be held monthly at a time designated by the pastor.***

***Should situations arise that warrant the convening of the Executive Staff and the Pastor is unavailable, the Chairman of the Deacons may convene the Executive Staff. The Pastor will be notified of said meeting. In the event there are issues concerning the inappropriate conduct and failure of the pastor to perform his duties, it is the responsibility of the Executive Staff to meet and deal with these matters at a meeting convened by the Chairman of the Deacons.***

- a) The Executive Staff will include the pastor, assistant pastors, deacons, trustees, and the Treasurers.
- b) An Executive Staff member will remain on the staff as long as he holds one of the above positions.
- c) The Executive Staff shall present to the church for vote those

prepared and made available to all members.

### **Section 10**- Reviews of Pastor's Salary Increases

- a) The Executive Staff will present a proposal to the church each year for the pastor's salary and benefit increase. This presentation will be at the annual business meeting.
- b) In the event that the pastor's salary needs reviewing other than at this time for any number of reasons (church financial ability, inflation, increase in family, etc.) the Executive Staff may present it to the church after receiving authority from the pastor.

## **ARTICLE III - OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

### **Section 1** - The Trustee Subcommittee

- a) The Trustee Subcommittee shall be no less than three men who are spiritually qualified members in good standing. The church may provide additional Trustees by majority vote when deemed necessary.
- b) Their term of office shall be for **four years**. They may serve two consecutive terms. After serving two consecutive terms that individual will be excluded from consideration for the next term but is eligible for consideration after sitting out for **one year**.
- c) Election of trustees shall be in the following manner:
  - 1) The Pastor, with recommendations of the Executive Staff, shall determine the number of Trustees than are needed (not to be less than dictated above).
  - 2) Nominations will be presented to the Executive Staff, based upon a man's character, testimony, and ability to fulfill the duties as outlined below.
  - 3) These men will be polled by the Pastor **and deacons** to determine their willingness to serve. (Note: this process will be repeated until the requisite number of men, as described in (c) (2) above, has been reached.)
  - 4) Their names will then be given to the church as a written ballot at an announced business meeting.
  - 5) The presiding **deacons will receive and count the ballots**.
  - 6) Those receiving the requisite number of votes will hold

## **ARTICLE VI - CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

### **Section 1**

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Himself states the church's duty to exercise discipline, excluding from its fellowship any member who persists in sin and disobedience to God's Word. His command to exercise discipline in the church is as definite as His commands to baptize and to commemorate His death by the use of symbols.

**Matt. 18:15-20.**

***The scriptures give a two-fold purpose for church discipline. The first is to try to persuade the wayward brother or sister to repent and return to a right relationship with the Lord and the church. The second purpose is to instill "fear" in others so they do not go down the same or similar path. I Timothy 5:20.***

The disciplining of sinning members of the church is necessary for the spiritual health and blessing of the church. It is indispensable to building truly Christian, spiritual, victorious congregations. To surrender this duty and privilege means weakness and defeat; sin and the world will slip in and take over; the Holy Spirit will be grieved and quenched.

### **Section 2** – Offenses

Should any member become an offense to the church and a stumbling block to the ministry by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, by consistent breach of his covenant vows, or by reason of heretical beliefs, the church may terminate his membership.

- a) Such action may be initiated only by the pastor. No public recommendation to either consider or prosecute such a move shall be made except by the pastor. ***The Executive Staff shall be informed before such action is taken before the church.***
- b) In all cases where disciplinary discharge is considered, the pastor **and deacons** shall exercise every spiritual means of persuasion and prayer to draw the errant member back into the fellowship of the church.
- c) When every effort has failed to restore such a member, the pastor shall recommend disciplinary discharge from the membership of the church.

d) The member in question shall then be notified by the pastor as to the time when such a recommendation is to be presented to the church.

e) The recommendation of the pastor shall include only sufficient information to indicate clearly the nature of the offense.

f) Once having been discharged for disciplinary reasons, the person shall be regarded lovingly by the church, which shall endeavor by prayer and invitation to win that person back into fellowship with Christ, hoping constantly for restoration with the church.

### **Section 3 - Examples of Bible Discipline**

a) One brother against another - **Matt. 18:15-17**: "...if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man..."

b) One guilty of fornication, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drunkenness, extortion. - **I Cor. 5:1-13**.

c) One who blasphemes - **I Tim. 1:20**.

d) One guilty of heresy - **Titus 3:10**.

e) One who is rebellious - **II Thes. 3:6, 14, 15**.

## **ARTICLE VII - THE OFFICE OF THE PASTOR**

### **Section 1 - Introduction**

The Biblical doctrine of the local church shall determine our conception of the ministry, which holds firmly the priesthood of all believers and, therefore, has no separated order of priests. The ministry is the gift of the Holy Spirit to the churches, and is an office involving both the inward call of God and the commission of the local church.

### **Section 2 - What the Word of God Teaches Concerning Pastors**

Definition of the terms:

1) Elder (presbuteros) - among Christians, those who presided over the assemblies (the churches) - **Acts 11:30; 14:23; 20:17; I Tim. 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5; I Pet. 5:1**.

2) Bishop (episkopos) - the superintendent, head, or overseer of

### **Section 7 - Church Business and Prayer**

a) It should be remembered by the members of this church that the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation and builder of the church, and that He should ever be present in active power, authority, and wisdom. To know the will of God is more important than to know the will of men. Therefore, each member should exercise his rights and privileges as believer priests in earnestly seeking to know the will of God in all matters pertaining to church matters at all times. Only those members who take part in the ministry of prayer can know God's will for the congregation. Unless everyone honestly and humbly seeks the will of God, the opinion of the majority may not be God's will. His church was born in prayer and should be guided by prayer.

b) Anything requiring decision by the congregation in a business meeting must be made a matter of continued prayer. As members should be in regular prayer for God's will in all things, the requirement of a minimum one-week's notification of a business meeting should provide ample time for prayer on the specific matter(s).

### **Section 8 - Church Budget(s)**

The budgets of the church will be the responsibility of the pastor. He may appoint any member(s) of the church in good standing to aid in the preparation of these budget(s). The budget(s) will be presented to the Executive Staff for approval and presentation to the church. The pastor is responsible for the final approval of budgeted expenditures. No other member(s) has authority to approve any other expenditures.

a) The fiscal year of the church shall be January 1 through December 31.

b) Presentation to the church: The budget(s) will be presented to the church for approval at the annual business meeting.

c) Vote of approval: A 51% approval vote will be required at the meeting.

### **Section 9 - Reporting of Income and Expenses**

A report of the income and expenses for the previous month will be

b) Special quorum. One-half of the total eligible voting membership of the church shall be required in cases of specially important matters, e.g., approving the annual budget, buying property, constructing a building, calling a pastor, terminating the pastoral relationship, etc.

**Section 3** - In keeping with the Constitution, Article VII, Section 2 (a) (1), (c) and (d), the Pastor shall serve as moderator of the church.

**Section 4** - Only those members in good standing, 18 years of age or older, shall vote in the business meeting.

- a) For those members unable to be present physically, email voting will be available.
- b) Members voting by email will need to view the business meeting proceedings via live-stream services, and will not be allowed to cast their vote until the moderator calls for a vote.

**Section 5 - General Business meetings** will be on Sunday Nights, with each meeting announced at least one week in advance. A written statement of the meeting's purpose(s) shall be made available when the meeting is announced.

**Section 6** - Procedure at Business Meetings

- a) Call to meeting
- b) Reports by pastor or other member of the Pastoral Staff or Executive Board, as designated by the Pastor
- c) Business – unfinished business from previous meetings will be handled before any new business. Only after all business has been resolved (or shelved for further research and/or prayer) shall new business be presented for consideration. In all cases, the following general guidelines will be observed for each item of business:
  - 1) When a business item is presented, a motion must be made and seconded, before it can be considered.
  - 2) Open discussion/debate follows (as required)
  - 3) Moderator restates the motion and, if necessary, clarifies the consequences of affirmative and negative votes
  - 4) Moderator calls for a vote
- d) Adjournment
- e) Closing prayer

any Christian church -  
**Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; I Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7.**

3) Pastor (poimen) - a herdsman, a shepherd - **John 21:16; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; I Pet. 5:2.**

We believe from studying the Scriptures that the three above titles - elder (presbuteros), bishop (episkopos), pastor (poimen) - all refer to the ministry of one and the same *person*. In Acts 20:17, the title elder (presbuteros) is used: "**And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders (presbuteros) of the church.**"

Then, in the 28th verse of the same chapter, speaking of the duties of the elders, Paul, by inspiration, says, "**Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (poimen - pastors), to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.**"

b) Qualifications of pastors - **I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:4-9.**

c) Duties of pastors – (those not already mentioned):

1) They are to be preachers of the Word of God - "**Preach the Word ...**"; they are to "**reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine...**"; "**Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of the ministry...**" **II Tim. 4:1-5; I Tim. 4:12-16.**

2) They must see that all phases of the ministry are cared for; the instruction of the children, the preaching of the Word of God to the saved and the teaching and training of all church officers and Sunday School teachers, the ministry of community evangelism and visitation of the sick, the care of those who are weak in faith, the ministry of prayer, the worship and preaching ministry of the church, etc. As those who preside over the gathering of the church, the *pastor* shall be responsible that order is kept; they shall act as leaders of the congregation, taking the initiative; they shall represent the congregation in pronouncing the decision. They must not allow a weak brother to engage in disputing and criticizing. They must not allow false doctrine to be taught. They shall conduct the baptismal and communion services.

d) The responsible leadership of the pastor in the congregation:

# BY- LAWS

## ARTICLE I - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

**Section 1** - This church, being a Baptist Church, shall use the congregational form of church government.

a) This church is and shall ever remain an autonomous church, with the governmental power in the hands of the church membership. The final authority of the church is with the church itself. It shall be the right of the church to rule in all church matters, in accordance with the law of Christ. This church shall, however, seek to cooperate with other churches of like faith and practice in matters of evangelism, missions and church education, when it can do so without violating the principles of the Word of God.

b) It is the right of this church to receive members, to exclude errant members, and restore excluded members who give satisfactory evidence of repentance.

c) The governmental power of the church cannot be transferred to any ecclesiastical or secular organizations without the church or to any person, committees, or boards within the church. The action of the church is always final.

**Section 2** - Let it be remembered that the Lord Jesus is the Foundation and the Head of every true church. The Bible is the sole authority in matters of faith and practice.

## ARTICLE II - BUSINESS MEETINGS

**Section 1** - Business meetings may be held at any time by the request of the pastor. In the event the church is without a pastor, the Executive Staff, by majority vote, will request a special business meeting. The time and place of special business meetings shall be announced to the church during a regular service in the same manner as ordinary business meetings.

**Section 2** - Quorum:

a) Ordinary quorum. Not less than ten members shall constitute an ordinary quorum for any regular business meetings of the church.

1) Although there is no "priestly authority" granted the pastor in the New Testament (since all Christians are priests unto God), there is, we believe, a certain leadership authority accorded him: **"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto the Word of God ... obey them that have the rule over you ..."** Heb. 13:7, 17.

**"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves ..."** I Thes. 5:12, 13, I Tim. 3:5, 5:17-19.

2) Authority of office grows out of the responsibility of office. It is not an ecclesiastical authority or an assumed authority but a given authority. Acknowledged as necessary, it is given by the Word of God! Let it be remembered that a pastor of a church is pastor of every function, committee, or activity of the church. He shall be an ex officio member of all committees and organizations.

3) Where and when a pastor ceases to follow Christ, or if he preaches any messages other than the clear teaching of the Scriptures, he has no spiritual right or authority and should not be followed.

e) Number of pastors:

1) There shall be one pastor. The pastor shall be chosen for an indefinite period by ballot upon the recommendation of the pulpit committee (see (f) (2) below).

2) As opportunity and need arise, others with gifts differing from those of the pastor may be called to serve in the capacity of Assistant Pastors of education, visitation, music, youth, etc. These staff members make up the Pastoral Staff. ***At such a time, a request for additional staff will be presented to the Executive Staff. Once an agreement has been made, the proposal will be presented to the church for a vote. Such a proposal will involve an adjustment to the budget unless such a proposal coincides with the annual business meeting. The responsibilities, hours and compensation (within the budget approved) will be determined by the pastor. Pastoral Staff members*** are responsible directly to the pastor. ***Pastoral Staff*** may be appointed by the pastor either from within the membership of the church (***if qualified individuals are available***) or may be secured from



fundamental colleges, or from evangelists, missionaries, and preachers of independent Baptist groups.

3) Once a name has been secured and before he is invited to preach, the Executive Staff needs to receive references (other preachers, school or church) from the man whereby the man's integrity and reputation can be checked on. ***Also the candidate will be sent a Pastoral Inquiry Form (see Attachment A). This Form will be filled out and returned before an invitation to speak has been issued.***

4) Once the above has been done, then the man shall be given an opportunity to preach in view of a call. He shall be given the opportunity to teach a Sunday School class of adults and preach both Sunday morning and evening services. A vote shall be taken ***by the church*** as to whether or not a call shall be extended. If the vote is yes, then the executive committee shall notify the man as to the decision of the church.

5) Unless circumstances beyond control prevent it, he shall assume full duties within four weeks. During those four weeks, he shall be responsible for getting preachers or missionaries to fill the pulpit. As soon as he assumes full duties, his salary shall begin.

h) Dissolution of the pastoral relationship:

1) A pastor may, as he believes the Holy Spirit leads, resign his position as pastor of the church. A two-week notice is required by the church.

2) Action by the church to terminate the pastoral relationship should be taken only after much prayer and only for the most serious reasons, i.e., immoral or unchristian conduct, heresy, or very serious dereliction of the pastoral duties. Such action may be initiated only within the Executive Staff and must be made in writing. The matter may be taken to the church only by the 100% unanimous vote of the Executive Staff. The pastoral relationship may then be terminated by ballot of a seventy-five percent vote of a special quorum present at a special business meeting called for that purpose. In the event the pastor is unfaithful and leaves his wife, or in the event of the pastor's death, the family will receive a minimum of 2 month's salary, plus any additional compensation, as determined by the Executive Staff.

outside the church. ***In the event that a staff member needs to be terminated for any reason, the Executive Staff will be notified of the pastor's decision as soon as it is possible. When possible and when needed, the pastor should seek the advice of other pastors or even from the Executive Staff regarding conflicts among himself and Pastoral Staff or among the Pastoral Staff members.***

f) Procedure to be followed by the church in calling a pastor:

1) We believe that it is the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit to call men into the full-time ministry, and we believe that the Holy Spirit should very directly lead in the placing of preachers in God's chosen field of service for them. **Acts 13:4.**

2) When the church finds it necessary to call a pastor, the Executive Staff shall serve as the pulpit committee.

3) After prayerfully seeking the leadership of the Holy Spirit, this committee shall seek out the candidate(s). When it has agreed on one man, the committee shall present his name to the church to vote on his call. Only one name shall be presented at a time.

4) The church membership shall be notified according to By-Laws Article II, Section 2 (b), (4), (6), and (8), that a vote to call a pastor shall be taken at a special business meeting.

5) A seventy-five percent vote of a special quorum shall be required to extend a call to a pastor.

6) If the candidate is rejected, or if he refused the call, the committee shall seek another candidate in the same manner described.

7) The call of this church to a pastor shall be for an indefinite period.

8) Once a pastor has accepted the call of the church, he shall become a member of the church as soon as it is convenient.

g) Seeking and qualifying candidates for position of pastor:

1) The candidate must be of the INDEPENDENT Baptist persuasion.

2) Names of candidates may be sought from sister churches,