

INTRODUCTION

These revisions to the Constitution have been made to more closely reflect the current operational needs of Bethany Baptist Church. In addition, recognizing that Bethany is a dynamic organization, a certain amount of flexibility has also been incorporated in order to more efficiently address future needs of the body.

The members of the Constitution Revision Committee are pleased to serve you and with God's direction and guidance present these revisions for your consideration.

This Constitution supercedes any previous document of similar nature adopted by this Church.

CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMITTEE

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PREAMBLE

Reposing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, believing in the teachings and practices of the Baptists and in those great distinctive principles for which they have ever stood, namely:

- A. The preeminence of Christ as our divine Lord and Master. (*Phil. 2:9-11*)
- B. The supreme authority of the Bible and its sufficiency as our only rule of faith and practice. (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*)
- C. The right of private interpretation and the competency of the individual soul in direct approach to God.
- D. The absolute separation of Church and State. (*Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:29*)
- E. A committed Christian membership. (*Acts 2:41-47*)
- F. The beautiful, symbolic ordinances of believers' baptism and the Lord's Supper in obedience to the command of Christ. (*Matt. 28:18-20; Matt. 26:26-28; Luke 22:14-20*)
- G. The complete independence of the local Church and its interdependence in associated fellowship with other Christian churches. (*Acts 14:23*)
- H. The spiritual unity of all believers, for which the Master so earnestly prayed. (*John 17:20-21*)
- I. A world –wide program of missionary fervor and evangelism in obedience to the final command of Jesus. (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8*)

We therefore, band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ and adopt for our government, plan of worship, and service the following articles:

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of the corporation shall be ***Bethany Baptist Church of Pittsburgh.***

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church shall be the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. It shall seek to attain this end through the public worship of God, the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, consistent Christian living by its members, evangelism, discipleship, missionary endeavors, and Christian Education.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section I – Qualifications

Any person may become a member of this Church upon completion of the following:

- A. The prescribed Christian Education classes.
- B. One of the following requirements:
 - 1. Confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and baptism by immersion (if physically possible).
 - 2. Submittal of a letter of Christian standing from a Christian church of like faith and order.
 - 3. Confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, if previously baptized by immersion.
 - 4. Confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord for the purpose of restoration.
- C. By vote of the Church.

Section 2 – Duties of Members

Members of the Bethany Baptist Church family are expected to give to the Church a significant portion of their:

- A. Time – As there are many groups which provide opportunities for service and ministry in the body of believers, it is expected that each member will find, and give some of their time to, at least one of these groups. It is expected that one will regularly attend worship with the Bethany family and seek continued opportunity for growth.
- B. Talent(s) – It is expected that members will make their gifts and skills available in practical ways to the congregation. As the congregation demonstrates needs it is expected that each member will do what they can to meet such needs.
- C. Treasure – It is expected that each member will regularly and substantially contribute to the financial needs of the congregation. While tithing (the giving of 10%) of one's earned income is not a law or a requirement, it is recommended as a consideration.

Section 3 – Relocation of Members

Members upon relocating are requested to furnish the Church office with their new address. Letters relinquishing membership for the purpose of uniting with some other Christian church of like faith and order shall be granted to members upon their request by the Pastor or Chairman of the Board of Deacons. Any member having been granted either a letter or certificate of Christian standing for their relocation purpose shall thereafter cease to be a member of this Church.

Section 4 – Request for Removal of a Name

When a member requests that their name be removed for other than relocation from the Church membership roll, the Pastor and the Boards of Deacons and Deaconesses shall counsel the individual. When satisfied that the member is no longer responsive to counseling, they shall present to the Church, at the next Business Meeting, a recommendation that the member's name be removed from the Church membership roll.

Section 5 – Dismissal of Members

It shall be the duty of the Board of Deacons (and where needed the Board of Deaconesses) to seek to counsel those members viewed as not living a Christian life. After counseling, if they are satisfied that the member's lifestyle is not consistent with biblical values, they shall present to the Church, at the Annual Business Meeting, a recommendation that the member's name be removed from the Church membership roll.

Section 6 – Reinstatement of Members

An individual who has ceased membership with this Church may request to have their membership reinstated. This may be accomplished after counseling by the Pastor, and the Board of Deacons and/or the Board of Deaconesses and completion of qualifications as specified in Section I of this ARTICLE.

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS

Section 1

The officers of this Church, who will assist the Pastor, shall be the ordained Associate Ministers, Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses, Trustees, Finance, and the Director of Christian Education and the Chairperson of the Board of Missions.

In addition, the following office positions shall be officers of this Church: the General Treasurer, the Financial Secretary and the Church Clerk.

Officers shall possess the attributes of stability, loyalty and Christian love for our Bethany family. They shall be of good character and reputation, able to maintain confidentiality and possess the ability to make sound judgment for the edification of this Church.

All officers shall be committed to a study for biblical instructions and discussion -- Church School, Wednesday night prayer-Bible study, growth group, board/committee group study, personal home study, etc. -- for continued spiritual growth in order that all may work together in spiritual harmony always focusing on and reaching towards the same goal of pleasing God. *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."* (NAS) -- II Timothy 2:15 .

Membership on each of the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses and Finance shall not exceed ten (10) percent of the Bethany family membership. Membership on the Board of Trustees shall be in compliance with the Church's charter. The Director of Christian Education shall be appointed by the Pastor and Boards of Deacons and Deaconesses.

The Church reserves the right to establish other offices as the need arises.

Section 2

Deacon candidates are selected by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons and are considered to be Deacons in Training. Candidates must be approved by the Church membership at the next Business Meeting. They shall be instructed by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons and upon the successful completion of at least one year of training and internship may be ordained to the office of Deacon. Once a Deacon has been ordained, he no longer has to be approved each year by the Church membership.

A deacon may be removed from the Board of Deacons when recommendations by the Pastor and Deacons are ratified by the Church at an Annual Business Meeting.

Deaconess candidates are selected by the Pastor and the Board of Deaconesses and are considered to be Deaconesses in Training. Candidates must be approved by the Church membership at the next Business Meeting. They shall be instructed by the Pastor and Deaconesses and upon successful completion of at least one year of training and internship may be ordained to the office of Deaconess. Once a Deaconess has been ordained, she no longer has to be approved each year by the Church membership.

A Deaconess may be removed from the Board of Deaconesses when recommendations by the Pastor and Deaconesses are ratified by the Church at an Annual Business Meeting.

Section 3

All officers shall be members of this Church and shall, with the exception of the Deacons, Deaconesses and the Director of Christian Education, be elected by voice, ballot or standing vote at the Annual Business Meeting.

No more than one-third (1/3) of the Board of Trustees may be newly elected at any time unless a vacancy was caused by resignation, relocation, honorary designation, or death.

Elected officers will be governed by the following regulations:

- A. An officer of the Church must be at least eighteen (18) years old.
- B. An officer's term is assumable at the close of the Annual Business Meeting.
- C. Tenure for officers shall be no more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection to the same board. Members of the Boards of Deacons and Deaconesses, the Church Treasurer, and Financial Secretary are EXEMPT from the rotational schedule that is in place for officers.
- D. Each board shall, unless otherwise stated in this Constitution, elect its own Chairperson annually.
- E. Chairpersons and Superintendents may serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as a Chairperson or Church School Superintendent.
- F. All Boards shall meet a minimum of ten (10) months per year.

Section 4

The Chairperson of each board, including the Boards of Deacons and Deaconesses, shall inform all officers in writing, as to the duties of their respective office within one month of election. The Chairperson of each board shall hold each officer accountable to perform and/or report on duties at monthly board meetings, to be held a minimum of ten (10) months per year with the exception of the Board of Finance as specified in its duties according to ARTICLE V Section 6 (g). Any officer who fails, for a period of ninety (90) days, to faithfully perform the duties pertaining to their office automatically vacates said office. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson to notify the officer, in writing, that they have not fulfilled their duties as required and therefore have vacated their office.

Officers who are sick, or performing family health care obligations, will be exempt from the ninety (90) days performance clause.

Section 5

Resignation of officers shall be in writing to the Nominating Committee Chairperson, Pastor and Church Clerk and will be effective on the date specified in the letter of resignation.

ARTICLE V
DUTIES OF THE PASTOR, ASSOCIATE MINISTERS AND OFFICERS

Section 1 – Duties of the Pastor

The Pastor shall preach/teach the Word of God, administer the ordinances, watch over the membership, promote the spiritual interests of the Church and organize and develop its strengths for the best possible service.

To the Pastor are committed **ALL** matters pertaining to spiritual and general welfare of the Church - its peace and harmony, its fellowship and good order, its pastoral and lay leadership, its worship and ordinances, its benevolences and ministries.

The Pastor may, at his discretion, appoint Licensees and Ordinands, after completion of required biblical studies, whose gifts and calling have been confirmed by the Church according to **ARTICLE VII** of this document, to serve as Associate Ministers.

The Pastor shall be a member of this Church, an officer, and a member of all boards, committees and organizations of the Church.

Section 2 – Duties of the Associate Ministers

Licensees serving as Associate Ministers shall, at the direction of the Pastor, assist in the spiritual care of the congregation by:

- A. Teaching and preaching the Word of God.
- B. Engaging in the ministries of evangelism, personal discipleship, counseling and visitation.
- C. Leading congregational worship.

Ordinands serving as Associate Ministers shall, at the direction of the Pastor, assist in the spiritual care of the congregation by performing the above duties as well as:

- A. Conducting and assisting with infant dedications, weddings, and funerals.
- B. Administering or assisting in the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

In the absence of a Pastor, all Associate Ministers shall function at the direction of the Board of Deacons.

Section 3 – Duties of The Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons, along with the Pastor, is committed to all matters pertaining to the spiritual and general welfare of the Church - its peace and harmony, its fellowship and good order, its pastoral and lay leadership, its worship and ordinances, its benevolences and ministries. The Church has the right to refer to the board any problem that arises, and the board is duty bound to consider every need and opportunity of the Church, which comes before it.

Along with the Boards of Deaconesses, Trustees, and Finance at a joint meeting be advised and oriented of any effort to secure monies for the Church from corporate donations, outside agencies, organizations, groups, grants proposals, etc. In situations where funds are being secured for the purpose to aid or benefit community and neighborhood needs, it will be the responsibility of the Board of Deacons in conjunction with the Boards of Deaconesses, Trustees, and Finance to properly orient and inform the Church of these endeavors. In addition, final decisions rest with the Church to approve the acceptance of external contributions of this nature.

All requests to establish or remove any program or ministry to or from the Church must first be presented to the Pastor and the Board of Deacons for consideration. Final decisions rest with the Church.

The Board of Deacons shall:

- A. In every way, assist the Pastor in his work and with him consider all applications for Church membership and requests for letters of dismissal.
- B. Cooperate with the Pastor in providing the pulpit supply and leaders of the prayer meetings in his absence.
- C. Along with the Board of Deaconesses, assist the Pastor in visiting the members, in the care of the sick, needy and distressed members of the Bethany family, and in the preparation for the observance of the ordinances of the Church.
- D. Have sole responsibility for the disbursements from the Benevolent Fund.
- E. Assist the Pastor in providing opportunities for Bible study and continued spiritual growth for the Bethany family.
- F. Assume responsibility for the Church in the event the Church is without a Pastor, or the Pastor is absent without cause or reason, or in any manner incapacitated. (*Hebrews 13:17-18*).
- G. Along with the Pastor and the Board of Deaconesses, appoint the Director of Christian Education.

- H. Serve in conjunction with the Pastor and the Music Committee to select the Minister of Music. In the absence of a Minister of Music, the Pastor, Board of Deacons and Music Committee will assume the duties as defined in the job description of a Minister of Music.
- I. Assist the Board of Missions in promoting the evangelistic programs of the Church.
- J. Assign a liaison member to each ministry of the Church.
- K. Meet with the Boards of Deaconesses, Finance and Trustees to review and finalize the proposed Annual Budget. This meeting is to take place a minimum of twenty-one (21) days before the Annual Business Meeting.
- L. Negotiate all pastoral contracts and compensation packages. All changes of a financial nature resulting from such negotiations must be presented to the Boards of Finance and Trustees for inclusion in the proposed Annual Budget.
- M. Consult with the Pastor for the appointment of Associate Ministers prior to presentation to the Church. Refer to ARTICLE VII.
- N. Maintain job descriptions and personnel files and prepare performance appraisals of the Pastor and all Pastoral staff a minimum of once a year.
- O. Along with the Pastor, approve and / or initiate all organizational changes to boards or committees of the Church when such changes are clearly in the best interest of the Church. The adoption of all changes rests with the Church.
- P. The Overseer Deacons and Deaconesses working with the Boards of Finance and Trustees will have responsibility for the following financial matters:
 - 1. Designate the financial institutions where monetary assets belonging to the Church shall be deposited.
 - 2. Monitor and approve the disbursement of contributions (funds) which have been budgeted for the current year.
 - 3. Research, evaluate, and select the investment vehicles for depositing monetary assets of the Church.
 - 4. Review and present unbudgeted expense requests which exceed 0.2% of the Annual Church Budget to the Church for approval. Excluded are emergencies that affect the operation of the Church's buildings or repairs to building mechanical systems or physical property.

The Chairperson shall be elected by the Board of Deacons and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of this board.

Section 4 – Duties of the Board of Deaconesses

The Board of Deaconesses shall assist the Pastor in developing the spiritual life of the women and girls of the Bethany family and shall oversee any ministry that is exclusive to women. It shall be a board committed to prayer and ministry for the edification of the Church.

The Board of Deaconesses shall:

- A. Visit members hospitalized, ill at home, confined to home and / or a nursing facility.
- B. Minister holistically to bereaved and/or distressed members of the Church.
- C. Follow-up contacts of women assigned through family ministry.
- D. Assist counselors in the visitation of candidates for membership.
- E. Assist the female candidates in the preparation for the observance of the ordinance of baptism.
- F. Prepare and maintain the Communion table and Communion elements.
- G. Assist the Pastor in the Biblical instruction and training of Deaconess candidates.
- H. Assist the Board of Missions in promoting the evangelistic program of the Church.
- I. Along with the Pastor and the Board of Deacons, appoint the Director of Christian Education.
- J. Meet with the Boards of Deacons, Finance and Trustees to review and finalize the proposed Annual Budget. This meeting is to take place a minimum of twenty-one (21) days before the Annual Business Meeting.
- K. Along with the Boards of Deacons, Trustees, and Finance at a joint meeting be advised and oriented of any effort to secure monies for the Church from corporate donations, outside agencies, organizations, groups, grants proposals, etc. In situations where funds are being secured for the purpose to aid or benefit community and neighborhood needs, it will be the responsibility of the Board of Deaconesses in conjunction with the Boards of Deacons, Trustees, and Finance to properly orient and inform the Church of these endeavors. In addition, final decisions rest with the Church to approve the acceptance of external contributions of this nature.

The Chairperson shall be elected by the Board of Deaconesses and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of this board.

Section 5 – Duties of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall:

- A. Hold in trust all properties belonging to the Church and shall be responsible for its financial affairs.
- B. Be responsible for the proper management of assets, and the protection of the Church's physical and monetary assets.
- C. Meet with the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses, and Finance to review and finalize the proposed Annual Church Budget. This meeting will take place a minimum of twenty-one (21) days before the Annual Business Meeting.
- D. A member of the Board of Trustees cannot serve simultaneously as the chairperson or director of any other board.
- E. Have responsibility for giving direction to and maintaining accountability for the Counting Committee.
- F. Assist the Board of Finance to enable it to prepare an itemized Annual Budget. The budget proposal should include anticipated yearly contributions and expense disbursements and shall be prepared sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Business Meeting.
- G. Ensure that monthly itemized reports of contributions and disbursements are provided for use by Church organizations.
- H. Meet with the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses and Finance to review and finalize the proposed Budget. This meeting is to take place a minimum of twenty-one (21) days before the Annual Business Meeting.
- I. Along with the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses and Finance at a joint meeting, be advised and oriented of any efforts to secure monies for the Church from corporate donations, outside agencies, organizations, groups, grants, proposals, etc. In situations where funds are being secured for the purpose to aid or benefit community and neighborhood needs. It will be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses and Finance, to properly orient and inform the Church of these endeavors. In addition, final decision rests with the Church to approve the acceptance of external contributions of this nature.
- J. Schedule and audit of the Church's financial records, a minimum of every three (3) years. The audit shall be conducted by an outside independent auditing company. The findings from the audits shall be presented to the Board of Finance. Summaries of the audits will be presented to the Church.

K. Perform such other duties as are imposed upon it by the Church and state.

The Chairperson shall be elected by the Board of Trustees and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of this board.

Members of the Board of Trustees shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection to the Board of Trustees.

A member of the Board of Trustees cannot serve simultaneously as the Chairperson or Director of any other Church board.

Section 6 – Duties of the Board of Finance

The Board of Finance shall ensure that the Board of Trustees upholds its Church and state responsibilities.

The Board of Finance shall:

- A. Coordinate the timely preparation of the proposed Annual Budget by requesting detailed written budgets from all organizations that plan to expend monies during the upcoming year. Budget requests must also include anticipated dates for expenditures / events to correspond with the quarterly Church reporting periods. Written justification of need shall be required for all capital expenditures, including a purchase versus lease / rent evaluation. As part of the Annual Budget preparation, the Board will also consider recommendations for salary, wage and honorarium adjustments.
- B. Meet with the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses and Trustees to review and finalize the proposed Annual Budget. This meeting to take place a minimum of twenty-one (21) days before the Annual Business Meeting.
- C. Monitor Church savings and investments and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for allocations and dispositions of related accounts. The final decision rests with the Church.
- D. Consider any unusual, unplanned, or extraordinary items during the year that might affect the financial position of the Church.
- E. Present its records immediately, if so requested by internal or outside auditors.
- F. Along with the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses and Trustees at a joint meeting, be advised and oriented of any efforts to secure monies for the Church from corporate donations, outside agencies, organizations, groups, grants, proposals etc. In situations where funds are being secured for the purpose to aid or benefit community and neighborhood needs. It will be the responsibility of the Board of Finance, in conjunction with the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses and Trustees, to properly orient and inform the Church of these endeavors. In addition, final decisions rest with the Church to approve the acceptance of external contributions of this nature.
- G. Meet a minimum of ten (10) times during the year according to the following:
 - 1. Prior to each Business Meeting
 - 2. As required, during the preparation of the proposed Annual Church Budget.
 - 3. Whenever other items of a fiscal, financial, or monetary nature warrant.

Members of the Board of Finance shall be the Pastor, Overseer Deacons and Deaconesses, Chairpersons or designees from the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses and Trustees, and the General Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Church Clerk, and three (3) members-at-large.

The Chairperson shall be elected by the Board of Finance and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of this Board.

Members of the Board of Finance shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection to this Board.

Section 7 – Duties of the Board of Missions

The Board of Missions shall direct the overall missions program of the Church.

Along with the Board of Christian Education, it shall co-sponsor seminars, with the Board of Christian Education, to instruct its members regarding neighborhood, community and Church evangelism. It shall implement other forms of local and community evangelistic programs as necessary.

The Board of Missions shall also encourage and maintain a national view towards missions. It shall make a special effort to increase the missionary interest and zeal of the Church through creative, innovative and practical methods for support of home and national ministries and implement other forms of home missions programs as necessary.

The Board of Missions shall direct the foreign missions program of the Church. Its objective shall be to encourage and maintain an international view towards missions. It shall make a special effort to increase the missionary interest and zeal of the Church through creative, innovative and practical methods for support of foreign missions. It shall continue to support missionaries and missions programs outside the United States and to implement other forms of foreign missions programs as necessary.

The Chairperson of the Board of Missions shall be elected by its members and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of the Board of Missions.

Members shall be appointed to the Board of Missions by the Nominating Committee each year. Members are EXEMPT from the rotation schedule that is in place for other Boards. The members may serve indefinitely.

The Board of Missions shall be organized into Teams with functional responsibilities and policies as defined in the Missions Handbook.

Section 8 – Duties of the Board of Christian Education

The Board of Christian Education shall unify, supervise and promote all Christian educational endeavors of the Church, including the Church School, Vacation Bible School, Summer Youth Program, Nursery, Junior Church and young people's fellowship groups. These endeavors are established and conducted for the purpose of biblical teaching and instruction, for promoting spiritual growth and edification, and for the equipping of believers for the work of ministry within the Church and the world.

The Pastor and Director of Christian Education shall interview and select board members. Positions on the board shall be established as needed. The Board of Christian Education shall:

- A. Appoint all Church School and Vacation Bible School officers not elected by the Church, advisors, club leaders, teachers, and all other needed workers.
- B. Promote and conduct classes, conferences or seminars for the training of workers in Christian education, personal evangelism, missions, and all other teaching sessions as the Church may request.
- C. Evaluate all Christian Education classes and ministries, making recommendations for any necessary changes for the purpose of growth and progress.
- D. Recommend to the Board of Finance an annual budget for the promotion of programs, purchase of materials, and necessary equipment and supervise its expenditures.

Members of the Board of Christian Education shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two years (2) before one is eligible for reelection to this board.

Section 9 – Duties of the Director of Christian Education

The Director of Christian Education shall be appointed by the Pastor and the Boards of Deacons and Deaconesses. The candidate's appointment shall be based upon their spiritual maturity, proven Bible knowledge and administrative gifts. (*II Tim. 2:2; 3:14-15; Eph. 4:11-16*).

The Director of Christian Education shall:

- A. Chair monthly meetings (a minimum of ten (10) per year) of the Board of Christian Education.
- B. Oversee the budgets of each ministry within the Department of Christian Education.
- C. Make recommendations to the Pastor and board to fill vacancies within the Board of Christian Education.

- D. Oversee the planning of training classes, conferences, or seminars for teachers and other workers.
- E. Present to the Board of Finance an annual budget comprised of all the ministries under the auspices of the Board of Christian Education.
- F. Serve on the Nominating Committee.

The Director of Christian Education shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive one-year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection to this position.

Section 10 – Duties of the Church School Superintendent

The Church School Superintendent(s) shall be appointed by the Board of Christian Education and its Director.

The Church School Superintendent(s), in cooperation with the Board of Christian Education, shall be responsible for the general supervision and promotion of the Church School.

The Church School Superintendent(s) shall:

- A. Be entrusted with making certain that the Word of God is the primary source of all class teaching, and that biblically based and doctrinally sound materials will be used for each class.
- B. Make recommendations to the Board of Christian for the appointment of teachers.
- C. Be responsible for the ongoing supervision and training of teachers.
- D. Keep records of each Sunday's Church School attendance and submit all offerings to the Counting Committee.
- E. Monitor classes and see that each is staffed with a teacher or substitute teacher.
- F. Undertake any other duties for the supervision of the Church School as needs arise or as direction is given by the Board of Christian Education and its Director.

The Church School Superintendent(s) shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection to this position.

Section 11 – Duties of the Church Clerk

The Church Clerk shall:

- A. Record accurate minutes of all business proceedings of the Church (including the acceptance and dismissal of members) and supply a copy to the Pastor and the Chairman of the Board of Deacons no later than one month prior to the next business meeting.
- B. Have access to the Church Seal and sign all official Church documents that require the signature of the Church Clerk.
- C. Issue Certificates of Baptism, Baby Dedication, letters of Christian standing and letters of dismissal as authorized by the Church.
- D. Serve as a member of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and maintain a copy of the Constitution and all revisions.
- E. Serve as a member of the Board of Finance.
- F. Preserve and properly file all official letters, reports, and other documents pertaining to the office.

The Church Clerk, upon completion of term in office, shall immediately deliver to the successor all books, files, records, and documents maintained during the term of office.

The Church Clerk shall be elected by the Church and shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection to this position.

Section 12 – Duties of the Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary is responsible for the establishment and / or maintenance of a financial records system for the Church that satisfies federal, state and local reporting requirements.

In addition, to the above general responsibility, the Financial Secretary shall:

- A. Possess a working knowledge of the accounting system software programs, including data input, account code maintenance, program table maintenance, system accuracy, and generation of check payments and various system reports.
- B. Provide advice and directions to others in the Church accounting function on the above.

- C. Ensure that all funds or contributions designated for specific purposes (as determined by the Counting Committee, Trustees, or Church) are recorded and expended for those purposes.
- D. Maintain a current signature file of individuals who are authorized to sign disbursement orders. Each organization must provide written notification to the Financial Secretary and General Treasure of those individuals authorized to sign orders.
- E. Maintain a list of disbursements that do not require a written order (e.g., utility bills, property tax payments, etc.)
- F. Prepare the proposed Annual Budget for review by the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses, Trustees and Finance in a joint meeting. This proposed Budget shall include estimates of contributions to each fund by reporting period, and estimates of related expenditures in a similar manner.
- G. Present to the Church at each Quarterly Business Meeting, an itemized report of all receipts and disbursements showing the actual financial condition of the Church in comparison to the forecast. These reports shall be made available for review by internal or external auditors.
- H. Deliver immediately to the successor all books and records pertaining to this office.

The Financial Secretary shall be elected by the Church and shall be EXEMPT from the rotation schedule that is in place for other officers. This exemption status is granted due to the complexity and the expertise required to carry out the responsibilities of this office. The fulfillment of the responsibilities of this office shall be evaluated biannually.

The Financial Secretary may, at will, vacate the position by submitting a letter of resignation. The Secretary may also be removed from this position when recommendations by the Pastor, and Board of Trustees, Finance, and Deacons are ratified by the Church at a Business Meeting.

Section 13 – Duties of the General Treasurer

The General Treasurer shall have abilities and / or training in either business, accounting, financial management or related skills.

The General Treasurer must be bonded and shall:

- A. Oversee the duties of the Financial Secretary and any such paid personnel who serve the Church family in a financial capacity.
- B. Be familiar with the computer system used to manage the Church finances.

- C. Have a working knowledge of the check writing procedures.
- D. Be familiar with the government reporting systems and financial reports, both regular and occasional that are generated by the Church.
- E. Oversee all funds and treasuries, with the exception of the Benevolent Fund, collected on behalf of and attributed to all groups, organizations and Boards of the Church.
- F. Be the Treasurer for the Boards of Missions and Christian Education, also the Scholarship and Building funds.
- G. Reconcile on a monthly basis the benevolent checking account bank statement from records submitted by the Benevolent Treasurer.
- H. Be responsible for the preparation of a complete written report of all receipts and disbursements at each quarterly business meeting or more often if so requested. The General Treasurer may assign this duty to the Financial Secretary or any paid financial consultant who is employed by the Church.
- I. Be responsible for the complete presentation of Church financial records upon the request of the Board of Finance.
- J. Deliver immediately to the successor all books and records pertaining to this office.

The General Treasurer shall be elected by the Church and shall be EXEMPT from the rotation schedule that is in place for other officers. This exemption status is granted due to the complexity and the expertise required to carry out the responsibilities of this office. The fulfillment of the responsibilities of this office shall be evaluated biannually.

The General Treasurer may, at will, vacate the position by submitting a letter of resignation. The General Treasurer may also be removed from this position when recommendations by the Pastor, and the Boards of Trustees, Finance, and Deacons are ratified by the Church at a Business Meeting.

Section 14 – Duties of the Benevolent Treasurer

The Benevolent Treasurer shall be elected from the Board of Deacons, which has the custodianship of the Benevolent Fund. The Board shall use its discretion in administering and disbursing from this fund.

The Benevolent Treasurer shall:

- A. Along with the members of the Board of Deacons, have directorship of all funds for administering to the poor, sick, and needy.
- B. Be accountable to the Board of Deacons and the General Treasurer for record keeping.
- C. Retain confidential records regarding recipients from this fund. This information will be known only to the Board of Deacons.

The Benevolent Treasurer shall immediately deliver to his successor all books and records pertaining to this office.

The Benevolent Treasurer shall be elected by the Board of Deacons and shall serve not more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection to this position.

ARTICLE VI CALLING A PASTOR

Section 1 – To Call a Pastor

When it is necessary to call a Pastor, the Boards of Deacons and Deaconesses shall appoint from the Bethany membership, a representative Pulpit Committee that shall be approved by the Church.

- A. The Pulpit Committee shall consist of a Chairperson and no less than six (6) other members and no greater than ten (10) other members. The committee shall always be comprised on an odd number of members.
- B. The Pulpit Committee shall include at least one representative from the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses, and Trustees.
- C. The Pulpit Committee shall consist of an equal number of men and women, excluding the Chairperson. The Committee shall have the duty of investigating the merits of every person under consideration in regards to personal character, reputation, education, ministerial record, and preaching / teaching ability. These and other criteria shall be employed to determine the fitness for said pastorate. After the Board of Deacons has approved the candidate as meeting all of the specific qualifications for a Pastor, the Committee shall recommend the candidate to the Church for consideration.

Section 2 – The Call of a Pastor

The call of a Pastor shall come before the Bethany membership at a regular or special Business Meeting. Notice of the meeting for the aforementioned purpose shall have been read from the pulpit on the two successive Sundays immediately prior to the meeting date. This notice shall be read by the Pulpit Committee Chairperson or by the Chairman of the Board of Deacons. A two-thirds (2/3) vote by the Bethany membership present and qualified shall be necessary to extend a call. Provisions shall be made for distribution to and collection of absentee ballots from sick and shut-in members. In addition, the Board of Deacons will rule on exceptional requests for an absentee ballot. Only one candidate shall be presented to the Bethany membership at any given meeting. The vote shall be by written ballot.

Section 3 – Pastorate Contract

The Pastor shall sign an initial contract of three (3) years. The option to renew this contract is subject to the agreement between the Board of Deacons and the Pastor. The length of contract renewal shall be negotiable with a minimum length of one (1) year. The Pastor's salary, benefits, and method of payments shall be negotiated between the Pastor and Board of Deacons.

Section 4 – Termination of Pastorate

The term of office may be ended upon thirty (30) days written notification initiated by either the Pastor or the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons only shall initiate the termination process if they determine that there has been a breach of contract.

Termination of the Pastor, by the Church, shall be confirmed by written vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Bethany membership. Notice of the meeting for the aforementioned purpose shall have been read from the pulpit, on two successive Sundays immediately prior to the meeting date, by the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

Upon termination by the Bethany family, a Pastor shall be entitled to severance pay for one month. The severance pay will be equal to one month's salary and will be payable after the expiration of the thirty (30) day notification period.

ARTICLE VII
LICENSURE AND ORDINATION OF MINISTERS

Section 1 – Licensure

- A. In order to be licensed by Bethany to preach the Gospel, an individual must have their name submitted to the Pastor as a candidate for licensure. The individual so nominated must have been a member of Bethany for at least three (3) years. After an interview with the candidate regarding the possible call upon their life to preach the Gospel, the Pastor may submit the nominee's name to the Board of Deacons.
- B. The Board of Deacons will interview the candidate for licensure within one month of notification from the Pastor and respond to the candidate in writing of its decision within six months of the interview.
- C. Upon unanimous approval by the Board of Deacons, the candidate's name shall be submitted to the congregation at the next regular Business Meeting, along with the Board's recommendation for approval. The congregation shall then, in the candidate's absence, discuss and vote upon the Board's recommendation. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present is required for approval.
- D. The candidate will begin a period of study, training, and ministry assignments under the direction of the Pastor or his designee. After a period of one year or more, and at the recommendation of the Pastor, a date shall be set for the preaching of their initial sermon.
- E. The issuance of the license may occur anytime thereafter, upon recommendation by the Pastor and concurrence by the Board of Deacons with the approval of the congregation. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present is required for approval.
- F. An individual already licensed by a sister congregation, who has been a member of Bethany for at least two (2) years may have their licensure confirmed by congregational resolution. Upon completion of an interview and recommendation by the Pastor, the Board of Deacons shall make written inquiry of the licensing congregation. Upon receipt of the licensing congregation's written response, the licensing confirmation process will follow the above steps (B) through (D).
- G. Upon licensure or confirmation of licensure, the licensee shall be eligible to serve as an Associate Minister.

Section 2 – Ordination

- A. Ordination declares that according to the Church's best judgement, the individual is qualified, both in training and in character, to pastor a congregation of God's people.
- B. After no less that one year of service as a licensee, an individual may have their name submitted to the Pastor as a candidate for ordination. After conducting a preliminary interview, the Pastor shall submit the candidate's name to the Board of Deacons for consideration.
- C. The Board of Deacons shall interview the licensee, and within two (2) months of the interview, notify the licensee in writing of its decision. Upon the unanimous recommendation of the Board of Deacons, the licensee's name shall be submitted to the congregation at the next regular business meeting, with Board's recommendation of approval for ordination training. The congregation shall then in the licensee's absence, discuss and vote on the Board's recommendation. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present is required for approval.
- D. Upon approval by the congregation, the licensee will begin a training period of at least one year, at the direction of the Pastor.
- E. At the end of the training period, the Board of Deacons with the concurrence of the Pastor, shall notify the licensee in writing of their decision to recommend them to the congregation as a candidate for ordination.
- F. Upon the unanimous approval of the Board of Deacons, the candidate's name shall be submitted to the congregation at the next regular business meeting, with the Board's recommendation of approval. The congregation shall then, in the candidate's absence, discuss and vote upon the Board's recommendation. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present is required for approval.
- G. The Pastor and the Board of Deacons will set a date for the ordination service.
- H. An individual already ordained by a sister congregation who has been a member of Bethany for at least two (2) years may have their ordination confirmed by congregational resolution. Upon the completion of an interview and recommendation by the Pastor, the Board of Deacons shall make written inquiry to the ordaining congregation. Upon receipt of the ordaining congregation's written response, the ordination confirmation process will follow the above steps (B) through (E).
- I. Upon ordination or confirmation of ordination, the ordinand shall be eligible to serve as an Associate Minister and be declared an officer of the Church.

ARTICLE VIII ELECTIONS

Section 1 -- Time

The annual election of officers shall be held in December of each year.

New Chairpersons should be elected by September 30th and be permitted to walk with outgoing chairpersons (October, November, and December) so that they better understand the responsibilities of the position.

Section 2 – Quorum

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the Bethany membership shall constitute a quorum. This quorum must be present throughout the meeting. Two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting shall be sufficient to decide any question presented unless otherwise provided in this Constitution.

Section 3 – Qualification of Voters

Members who are eighteen (18) years of age or older are entitled to vote on all matters concerning the Church.

Section 4 – Procedure

At the annual business meeting, the Nominating Committee shall present to the Church membership, after ratification by the Board of Deacons, the names of qualified members recommended for each office to be filled. It shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to advise the Church body by July 31st of any upcoming vacancies for various offices to be filled at the annual business meeting. This will allow any member qualified to vote to place in nomination the name(s) of any eligible member(s) for same. Nominee names must be submitted to the Nominating Committee no later than August 31st.

Any accepted nomination from the floor must go through the interview and ratification process prior to assuming office.

Section 5 – Vacancies

Vacancies that occur during the year shall be filled for the unexpired term within sixty (60) days or at the next Business Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall be advised immediately so that it can present to the Church membership nominees for the vacancies to be filled. Standard voting procedures shall then apply.

ARTICLE IX COMMITTEES

Each committee shall, unless otherwise addressed in this Constitution, elect its own Chairperson who shall be eligible to serve no more than three (3) consecutive one year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of the same committee.

Within one month of their elections, the Chairperson shall inform all committee members, in writing as to their duties. Committees shall meet a minimum of ten (10) months per year.

Unless otherwise stated in this Constitution, committee members shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection to the same committee.

ARTICLE X STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1 – Name of Committees

The following named committees and any others that may be deemed necessary by the Church shall constitute the standing committees: CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS, COUNTING, MUSIC, NOMINATING, PERSONNEL, and USHERING.

Section 2 – Duties of Committees

- A. The CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE shall ensure that all boards, committees, and organizations are functioning and adhering to the policies and procedures of the current Constitution and Bylaws of the Church.

It will study and review, during the year, the operations under the Constitution and Bylaws. It may suggest amendment changes to the Pastor and the Boards of Deacons and Deaconesses which must be sent to the Church body as prescribed by ARTICLE XIV, entitled *Constitution Amendments*.

All internal organizational regulations, rules, or bylaws must be on file with this committee and shall not be drawn to conflict with the Church's Constitution and Bylaws. All proposed changes by boards, committees, and organizations must be immediately forwarded to this committee.

The composition of this committee shall be the Pastor, Chairpersons of the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses, Trustees, Missions, Finance, the Director of Christian Education and the Church Clerk. There shall also be one (1) member at large. It shall meet at least four (4) times per year.

The Chairperson shall be elected by the committee and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of this committee.

Members-at-large shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as a member-at-large of this committee.

- B. The MUSIC COMMITTEE shall cooperate with the Pastor, Board of Deacons and the Minister of Music to provide the proper music ministry for the Church.

In the absence of a Minister of Music, the Music Committee will serve in conjunction with the Pastor and the Board of Deacons to assume the duties, as defined in the job description, of a Minister of Music.

This committee shall be comprised of choir presidents, Minister of Music, representatives of all music organizations of the Church, all staff musicians who are members, and a sound reproduction technician. At least three (3) but no more than five (5) members-at-large from the Church membership with varied musical backgrounds shall be selected by the Nominating Committee.

The committee shall meet a minimum of ten (10) months per year to review and coordinate all aspects of the music ministry of the Church.

The Chairperson shall be elected by the Committee and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of this committee.

Members-at-large shall serve on more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection to this committee.

- C. The COUNTING COMMITTEE shall be comprised of six (6) members of the Board of Finance and up to fourteen (14) members-at-large.

It will receive direction from the Board of Trustees.

The committee will be responsible for counting the Sunday morning offering and preparing a weekly report showing how the Church contributions were credited to the respective accounts.

The Chairperson shall be elected by the Committee and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of this committee.

Committee members are elected by the Church and are EXEMPT from the rotation schedule that is in place for other committees because of the confidential nature of this position.

- D. The NOMINATING COMMITTEE shall prepare a list of names from the Church membership of those qualified to fill various office vacancies. It shall interview each candidate to ascertain their understanding of the office under consideration, and to determine their qualifications as well as willingness to serve.

All nominees will be ratified by the Board of Deacons and be presented to the Church body at the Annual Business Meeting for approval. Any accepted nomination from the floor must first go through the interview and ratification process prior to assuming office. When the office becomes vacant, prior to the Annual Business Meeting, the Nominating Committee shall be advised immediately in order that the aforementioned selection process can be utilized. (See Article VIII, Section 5 – Vacancies)

This committee shall be comprised of the Pastor, Chairpersons or designees of the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses, Trustees, Missions, the Director of Christian Education, and five (5) members-at-large elected at the Annual Business Meeting.

The Chairperson shall be elected by the committee and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of this committee.

Members-at-large shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as a member-at-large of this committee.

- E. The PERSONNEL COMMITTEE shall consist of up to nine (9) members. Three of these shall be the Chairpersons or designees of the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses, and Trustees. The remaining members shall be appointed by the Nominating Committee, with approval by the Church membership. The committee shall elect its own Chairperson and hold at least quarterly meetings. The Personnel Committee shall have overall responsibility for all personnel related matters of paid employees. The committee shall also provide advice and counsel to all employees and officers dealing with sensitive personnel issues. Written operating procedures for this committee shall be available for review upon request.

The primary responsibilities of the Personnel Committee shall be to:

Assist those individuals responsible for the supervision of employees and officers. This assistance includes recruitment and retention, conducting performance appraisals, progress reviews, individual development planning, and writing position descriptions essential to establish performance standards. Guidance will also be given in the area of disciplinary action and terminations of paid employees (pastoral staff is exempt).

Prepare and maintain current position descriptions for each paid employee (pastoral staff is exempt.)

Ensure that each paid employee receives an annual performance appraisal (pastoral staff is exempt.)

Maintain personnel files for all paid employees (pastoral staff is exempt.)

Develop comprehensive compensation (salary and benefits) plans for all paid employees. Compensation recommendations for the Pastor will be presented to the Board of Deacons for its action in accordance with ARTICLE VI, Section 3 – Pastorate Contract of this Constitution. Compensation plans for other paid employees will be reviewed on an annual basis with the Boards of Finance and Deacons.

The Personnel Committee shall undertake other personnel related issues as the needs arise and / or as directed by the Pastor or the Boards of Deacons, Deaconesses, or Trustees.

The Chairperson shall be elected by the committee and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of this committee.

Members-at-large shall serve no more than four (4) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as a member-at-large of this committee.

- F. The USHERING COMMITTEE shall attend to the seating of the congregation and to the receiving of the offering. It shall be responsible for directing the movements of the congregation as a whole and assure that bulletins, Bibles, and hymnals are distributed adequately.

It shall train and direct all Church ushers.

It shall train and direct ushers in the operation of the elevator. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to have the elevator staffed for services, funerals, and other special events.

This committee addresses the concerns of the congregation during the services.

The Chairperson shall be elected by the committee and shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of this committee.

Members of the Ushering Committee are EXEMPT from the rotation schedule that is in place for other committees. The members of this committee may serve indefinitely.

ARTICLE XI
WORSHIP SERVICES, BIBLE STUDY AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 1 – Worship Services

- A. The Church shall meet each Sunday for worship and the preaching and teaching of the Word of God.
- B. The Church shall meet for the observance of the Lord's Supper on the First Sunday of each month or at such other times as the Church may decide.

Section 2 – Bible Study

- A. The Church shall meet at least once each week, other than Sunday, for prayer, testimony, biblical instruction and discussion.
- B. The Church shall meet each Sunday for Church School (the study and teaching of the Bible) or at such other times as the Church may decide.

Section 3 – Business Meetings

- A. The Pastor may act as the Moderator for all Church business meetings. The Chairman of the Board of Deacons may act as the Vice Moderator and preside at Church business meetings either by mutual consent with the Pastor or in the Pastor's absence.
- B. The Annual Business Meeting shall be held in December each year for the purpose of receiving the proposed Annual Budget, annual reports, and the election of officers. Other business, as is proper, may also be conducted at this meeting.
- C. The Business Meetings shall be held in April, July, and October.
- D. Special Business Meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor or by the Church Clerk upon written request of a quorum – twenty-five percent (25%) of the Church membership qualified to vote. The Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall give notice, from the pulpit, of such a meeting and the objective for which it is called, at least two (2) successive Sundays immediately prior to the date of the meeting.

ARTICLE XII AD HOC COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1 – Officers

Officers, as well as leaders and directors of all ad hoc committees and organizations, shall be members of the Church. They shall be elected by their respective ad hoc committee or organization or be appointed by the Pastor and / or the Boards of Deacons and Deaconesses, subject to ratification by the Church.

They shall possess attributes of stability, loyalty, and Christian love for the Bethany family. They shall be of good character and reputation, able to maintain confidentiality and possess the ability to make sound judgement for the edification of this Church.

As chosen heads, all should be committed to a study for biblical instruction and discussion – Church School, Wednesday night prayer-Bible study, growth group, board / committee group study, personal home study, etc. – for continued spiritual growth in order that all may work together in spiritual harmony always focusing on and reaching toward the same goal of pleasing God. *“Be diligent to present your self approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.” – II Timothy 2:15 (NAS)*

The Chairpersons shall serve no more than three (3) consecutive one (1) year terms. There shall be a lapse of two (2) years before one is eligible for reelection as Chairperson of the same organization.

Members of organizations are EXEMPT from the rotation schedule and may serve indefinitely.

Members of ad hoc committees may serve until assignments have been completed.

Section 2 – Bylaws

The bylaws of organizations shall be drawn so as not to conflict with the Constitution of this Church. A copy of these bylaws must be on file with the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Section 3 – Meetings

Ad hoc committees and organizations may hold meetings at such times that will not conflict with the meetings of the Church. Ad hoc committees and organizations shall accept guidance from the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE XIII
CHURCH YEAR

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on January 1st and end on December 31st.

ARTICLE XIV
CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any regularly or called Business Meeting of the Church by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting, provided a quorum, twenty-five percent (25%) of the Bethany membership, qualified to vote, is present. Notice of such amendment(s) stating the proposed change, must have been given on two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to the vote.

ARTICLE XV
RULES OF ORDER

The rules contained in the most recent *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern the business proceedings of this Church in all cases where they are not addressed by this Constitution.

BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH Church Discipline – Accountability Guidelines

I. INTRODUCTION

Here at Bethany, we believe that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) We believe that as long as we live in our present bodies that have been marred by the Fall, we will continue to sin. We also believe that believers in Christ are being sanctified by the Spirit of God and are held accountable for their actions before God and before the Church universally. Therefore, the child of God should not enter into any pattern of sinful activity. This not only affects the sinning member, but also harms the Church and hinders the lost from coming to Christ. The New Testament contains instructions for the Church regarding moral discernment and outlines a healthy process for initiating discipline and accountability in the Body of Christ. A healthy church is one that takes these instructions seriously.

II. TWO PURPOSES OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

A. RESTORATION

The first purpose of Church Discipline is to restore members who have been overtaken in fault (Galatians 6:1). In distinguishing the nature of Church Discipline, Carl Laney in his book, A Guide to Church Discipline says:

“Many people fail to make a clear distinction between punishment and discipline, and there is a very significant difference between these two concepts. Punishment is designed to execute retribution for a wrong done. Discipline, on the other hand, is to encourage the restoration of one involved in wrongdoing. Punishment is designed primarily to avenge a wrong and assert justice. Discipline is designed primarily as a corrective for the one who has failed to live according to the standards of the church and/or society.”

B. PURITY

The second purpose for Church Discipline is to do what Paul commanded in I Corinthians 5:7 – “purge out the old leaven.” A certain man was living in sexual immorality and Paul admonished the Corinthians to get rid of this sin in the Body of Christ. Jesus wants a bride (the Church) “not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27). Therefore, when the sins of the world come into the Church, the Church must deal with them through “disciplined grace”. This simply means the church will deal directly with sin with a ready attitude to forgive.

SUMMARY

When members live in open sin without Church discipline, an injustice is done to the offending member, the Body of Christ and Christ Himself.

III. THE PROCEDURE FOR RESTORATION

A. INTRODUCTION

Believing that God has given the Church the authority and mandate to discipline those members who are in gross violation of the Word of God, this document has been compiled to identify a Procedure for Restoration. There are many sins that believers commit every day, and it is not the Church's intention to initiate discipline unless sinful activity has been established and is clearly harming the offended and offender, is bringing repudiation to the name of Christ, and is placing the testimony of the Church in a bad light. Every situation will be approached individually with prayerful consideration, a listening ear, review and analysis of the facts, and with the purpose of restoring those involved in righteousness and service.

B. MEMBERS

1. If a member is aware of another member in serious violation of one of the areas defined in this document (see Definitions), that member should carefully examine Matthew 7:1-5 and consider their own spiritual condition first and whether they have contributed in any way to the violation. Only then should a member proceed, using the procedure found in Matthew 18:15-17 with purpose of restoration (Galatians 6:1).
2. In the event that Church leadership becomes aware of an alleged violation by a member, the Pastor along with the individual's family shepherd shall go to the alleged offender exercising Matthew 18:15-17, seeking restoration (Galatians 6:1). If any member involved is under the age of eighteen (18), the Pastor along with the family shepherd, shall go to the parents (or guardians) to assist, encourage and support them as they work with the minor seeking restoration. Following this time of discernment, a plan of repentance and restoration will be developed which include the following:
 - a) Members involved will be given a covenant agreement outlining expectations.
 - b) When it is deemed necessary, members must agree to counseling with the focus on repentance and restoration.
 - c) Where sin has been identified in a member's life, that member must confess the sin and desire to overcome it.
 - d) Any offending member involved with a ministry or in a position of leadership, after the initial assessment, may be asked to step down from that ministry or leadership position during the time of counseling and until repentance and restoration take place.
 - e) The Pastor will assign a trained Biblical Counselor to the offending member to begin the counseling process.

- f) The Counselor will contact the member immediately to set up the first counseling meeting.
 - g) After three sessions, the Counselor will give a written report to the Pastor stating the progress of the member as to dealing with the sin issue, after which the Pastor shall meet with both the Counselor and counseled to discuss the report submitted.
 - h) After six (6) weeks, the Pastor, Counselor, and an Accountability Review Committee (to be selected from the Boards of Deacons and Deaconesses) will determine the member's status. They will determine if further counseling is needed and if fellowship has been restored to the Lord and/or with the other persons who may have been involved.
- 3. After every effort has been made toward repentance and restoration, if the offending member has failed to cooperate, the matter shall be put before the Church body with a written recommendation from the Pastor, Counselor, and the Accountability Review Committee. The purpose is to give the offending member every opportunity to repent and be encouraged by the body.
 - 4. In the event the individual remains unchanged and unrepentant, the final step would be to remove the member's name from the Church membership roll.

(Matt. 18:7; I Cor. 5:13; Rom. 16:17; I Thess. 3:14; Titus 3:10)

C. NEW MEMBER CANDIDATES

- 1. After the home visit by the Altar Counselor, Deacon and/or Deaconess, the Pastor will be immediately informed of any issues that need to be addressed.
- 2. The Pastor will meet with the New Member Candidate to address any issues that were observed during the home visit. The Candidate must be willing to address the issues and receive counseling.
- 3. The New Member Candidate will be assigned a trained Biblical Counselor and follow the same procedure as mentioned for members under paragraph 2.B.
- 4. The New Member Candidate will not receive the right hand of fellowship until repentance has taken place and a change in lifestyle is evident.
- 5. A progress report will be given to the Pastor and Accountability Review Committee who will make a decision as whether counselee is to continue in the membership process or due to lack of cooperation, the membership process should be terminated.

DEFINITIONS

1. OPEN SEXUAL IMMORALITY – I Corinthians 5:13

All members involved in any type of known sexual intercourse outside of marriage will be encouraged to make things right.

2. UNRESOLVED PERSONAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN MEMBERS WITHIN THE BODY – Matthew 18:15-20

Jesus' prayer for believers in John 17:11 was that "they be one". In John 12:35 Jesus said "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love for one another". From these passages, it is quite clear that Jesus placed a high premium on unity in the body. Knowing that there would be times when the saints would be in conflict. He even put in place a process for restoration between two individuals. The person wronged was encouraged to go to the one who wronged him and seek reconciliation. Should this fail, the offended brother/sister would take with him/her one or two more, that they might be reconciled. If this is not successful, the issue should come before the Church body. If all fails, the individual must be asked to leave the church. In light of the fact that Jesus commanded his followers to love one another, and the great emphasis placed on believers loving each other in the New Testament, any members who have unresolved conflict between them will be challenged to be restored to their brother or sister in the Lord.

3. ONE WHO SOWS DISCORD WITHIN THE BODY – Romans 16:17

Peace and unity are essential within a church. A person who intentionally brings division among the believers within the body by drawing them into discord or strife is in gross violation of the Scriptures (Proverbs 6:19; Romans 16:17). The Church is responsible to note "those who cause division" and address them (Romans 16:17).

4. ONE WHO TEACHES OR SPREADS FALSE DOCTRINE -- Titus 3:10

Any person who openly rejects doctrines the Church considers essential to the Christian faith will be warned twice and after that, rejected by the Body.

5. CONDUCT THAT IS UNBECOMING OF A BELIEVER - I Corinthians 5:9-13

The Church will address any conduct that is considered to be a gross violation of Christian character and Biblical standards.

6. PROLONGED ABSENCE FROM CHURCH ATTENDANCE – Hebrews 10:25

The least a person can do in appreciation for eternal life is attend worship services. If a member falters in this charge, it is the responsibility of the Church to ascertain the purpose for the absence and to seek to rectify it. It is also understood that some members are unable to attend due to sickness, college, military and other legitimate reasons.

BYLAWS

1. In order that we may have consistently a sacred and spiritual order of service on Sunday morning, there shall be no interference with the regular Sunday morning service by any organization of the Church or from any other source. Exceptions must be approved by the Pastor and Board of Deacons or by the Church.
2. Boards, committees, or organizations of the Church at no time shall maintain checking or savings accounts in a bank or other type of financial institution using the name of Bethany Baptist Church.
3. Boards, committees, or organizations of the Church at no time shall retain more than three hundred dollars (\$300.00) in a treasury. (i.e., dues, flower funds, etc.) All balances in excess of this amount are to be transferred to the church accounts no later than January 31st of the new year. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Board of Finance.
4. The Pastor shall be paid a salary commensurate with the financial ability of the Church. The Pastor's anniversary may be recognized. The Boards of Deacons and Deaconesses will be responsible for determining the manner of recognition. All other boards, committees, and organizations of the church may not individually recognize the anniversary or give gifts to the Pastor.
5. Providing that the line item has been budgeted, purchases or contracts up to two hundred dollars (\$200.00), made in the name of the Church, must have an order which has been signed by the Financial Secretary and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees or his/her designee.
6. Purchases or contracts from two hundred dollars (\$200.00) up to two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) made in the name of the Church, must have an order which has been signed by the Financial Secretary and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees or his/her designee.
7. Purchases or contracts made in the name of the Church from two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) and up must be signed by the Financial Secretary and the Chairpersons of the Boards of Trustees and Deacons, or their designees.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

WE BELIEVE:

1. In one God manifesting Himself in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the work of redemption.

Ex. 20:2,3; I Cor. 8:6; I John 5:7

2. The Bible is the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God, It is the product of Spirit controlled men and without error in the original languages. It is the supreme revelation of God's will for man, and is our only rule of life and practice.

II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:19-21

3. In the deity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, His miracles, His death upon the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the world; His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal pre-millennial and imminent return in power and glory.

Isaiah 7:14; John 1:1; Matt. 1:18-25; Matt. 28:6; Acts 15:16; I Peter 2:22; I Peter 3:18;

John 14:3; I Thess. 4:16

4. Man was created in the image of God. When Adam (the first man) sinned, all mankind was born into sin, and except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; he is saved by grace through faith in Christ who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gen. 1:26,27; Eph. 2:8,9; John 3:3-6; I Peter 2:24; Romans 6:23

5. That the Church consists of all who trust in Christ and are true believers in His atoning death. Its purposes are for the perfecting of the saints, for other work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12-13). Its mission is to witness concerning its Head, Jesus Christ and to obey His command of teaching and preaching the Gospel to all nations.

Matt. 28:13-20

6. The moment we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we are placed into the Body of Christ. This act is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is through this baptism that we become identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. There is therefore only "one baptism" of the Holy Spirit that believers have, which takes place at the time of salvation. Water baptism is only a symbol of this one baptism. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, however, is not a once-and-for-all experience. Therefore, there are many fillings. The believer is commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This filling is a constant renewal of the believer's life for strength and action. The believer needs the filling of the Spirit to serve Christ. When we are filled with the Spirit, we are controlled by the Spirit.

I Cor. 12:3; Eph. 4:3-5; 4:30; 5:18