

Church Constitution & Bylaws

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, FORT OGLETHORPE, GEORGIA, INC.

Approved by the Church Body

August 4, 2019

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
Preamble	2
Name	2
Mission	2
Vision	2
Statement of Basic Beliefs	2
Church Covenant	3
Polity	3
By-Laws	3
Church Staff	5
Designated Leaders	7
Committees	9
Meetings	12
Organizations	13
Discipline	13
Leadership Council	13
Liability	14
Amendments	14

CHURCH CONSTITUTION

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FORT OGLETHORPE

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Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution in order to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, as set forth in the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, to govern the body in an orderly manner and to set forth the corporate commitment of our church membership. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

We pledge ourselves to the personal commitments set forth in the Church Covenant in the belief that the strength and unity of the church are dependent upon the discipline and the level of commitment of each church member.

I. NAME

This body shall be known as the FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FORT OGLETHORPE, GEORGIA, INCORPORATED.

II. MISSION

Our **mission** is to lead people into a life-changing relationship with God through personal faith in Jesus Christ.

III. VISION

We were founded on our mission in 1952, and we **envision** being a church family who not only leads our community into life-changing relationships with God, but also plants other churches who also lead people into life-changing relationships with God.

Our vision includes three primary platforms to accomplish our mission: Gather <> Grow <> Go

We strive to be a church family in which everyone is engaged in a consistent, gathered worship experience that is authentic and empowered by God's Word and Spirit.

We strive to be a church family in which every member connects with a class or small group for ongoing spiritual growth, ministry care, and close relationships with members and new people.

We strive to be a church family in which every member becomes a faith multiplier by connecting with new people through consistent ministries and missions as we "go" about our daily lives.

IV. STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and the basis for our beliefs. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, personally committed to caring for each other and sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. (See Article V, Section I.)

We are a faith-based family who strive to love our neighbor as ourselves and we show this love by serving our community and helping people turn to Jesus. We also strive to love God above all else, which means standing on the principles found in His Word. This is a top priority for the Church, especially in an age where the ways of the world have become different from God's way. The institution of marriage is one of those areas where much of the world has chosen a different way.

As a result, we are offering this Statement on Marriage. By this statement, we have made a faith-based decision to follow God's Word in Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:4-6, in which God ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man and a woman. Based on those Scriptures, we affirm God's definition of marriage and will only recognize marriages between one man and one woman, as created by God.

This Statement on Marriage gives us the right and authority to restrict the use of church facilities and property to uses consistent with the Bible, the Church Constitution and Bylaws, and this Statement on Marriage, as solely determined by the Church. Nothing in this Statement is intended to exclude any person from attending a Bible study, worship gathering, or any other weekly ministry of this Church.

V. CHURCH COVENANT

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

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

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to spiritually 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 conduct; to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the abuse of intoxicating drinks and illegal drugs; to use our influence to combat the abuse of alcohol and drugs and the spread of pornography; to promote wholesome marital relations, the sanctity of life and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

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

VI. POLITY

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist Churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the local Baptist association, the Georgia Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

CHURCH BY-LAWS

I. Church Membership

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 1. Candidate for Membership

We believe that church membership begins with each member having a salvation testimony of personal faith in Jesus. Any person who wishes to be a candidate for membership is encouraged to share their testimony of faith with one of our church leaders. Every candidate for membership, whether by profession of faith, letter, statement or restoration, shall appear in person before the church, unless institutionalized or, in the judgment of the pastor, is permanently disabled or terminally ill, or in military service at the time his or her name is presented. Baptism will be necessary to confirm membership if he or she has yet to experience believers' baptism by immersion. Confirmation of new members is outlined in Section 6 below.

Section 2. Baptism

We believe in believer's baptism as opposed to infant baptism. Though we do not hold that baptism is essential for salvation, we deem it important for the beginning of discipleship. The form traditionally practiced by Baptists is immersion. We believe immersion best represents the New Testament symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord; however, we recognize the validity of all believers' conversion, whatever the form of baptism. Any person who has been immersed and whose baptism is in accordance with Baptist beliefs may be considered by the church for membership. If immersion were not the mode of baptism at the time of conversion, because we are Baptists, we humbly call all members to be immersed.

Section 3. Letter

A member of another Baptist church may be received into the fellowship of this body on his/her "promise of letter" and recommendation from his/her respective church.

Section 4. Statement

Persons who have once been members of Baptist churches and in consequence of peculiar circumstances have no regular letters may be received into the fellowship of this church on giving to the pastor satisfactory testimony of Christian conversion and former church relationships.

Section 5. Watchcare

This church will consider receiving other Baptists into our fellowship under watchcare in particular circumstances. People who will be area residents for short periods of time (six months or less) to work, attend school, or for other valid reasons may wish to be under watchcare rather than move their church letters. Persons under watchcare will be given full privileges of church membership during this period of time after presenting their request to the pastor and being voted on by the church. If circumstances for the person change after the specific time, watchcare may be extended, or church letters may be obtained at the person's request and approval of the church.

Section 6. Confirmation of New Members

All persons presenting themselves for membership under the above five sections will be presented to the church by the pastor and voted upon for full membership. Each new member shall be encouraged to study this constitution and bylaws and attend any new member orientation.

Section 7. Responsibilities of Church Members

It shall be the responsibility of the members of this church to be committed followers of Jesus Christ and to pursue Him to the best of their abilities with personal holiness, ongoing spiritual growth, worship, and service. Members are expected to bond together as a local church family to live out this pursuit of Jesus by participating in a consistent gathered worship experience, connecting in small groups or classes, reaching out to the community through consistent ministries and missions, and otherwise supporting the church family financially through tithes, gifts, and offerings. Whether we are together or apart, each member is vital to this church family and to being a light for Jesus wherever we are.

Section 8. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: death of the member, transfer of letter to another Baptist church, exclusion by action of this church, proof of membership in a church of another

denomination, or deletion upon request. If a member requests to be released from his covenant and obligations to this church, a member of the pastoral staff, whenever possible, will call together two or three fellow church members who are closest with the outgoing member (a teacher and care leader from that person's group or class if possible) and reach out to the person with the hope of patiently and compassionately encouraging the person to continue in membership with the church. The church will receive and consider their report in acting upon the requested release.

Section 9. Rights of Active Members

Members who are in good standing with the responsibilities of Section 7 shall be considered Active Members. Only active members may act in and vote on the transactions of the church. Active members who live within reasonable commuting distance to the church campus and, unless disabled, have attended at least six (6) worship services or group meetings during the past twelve (12) months are eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church. Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

Section 10. Inactive Members

The church reserves the right to classify a member as an inactive member for purposes of church record keeping based on the following criteria: The member has not attended a worship service or group meeting in the twelve (12) months. Becoming inactive is not the same as termination, and the member can be restored back to active status once he or she is carrying out the responsibilities as set forth in Section 7 on the Responsibilities of Church Members.

II. Church Staff

All staff pastors of this church shall be active members as described in Section 7 above regarding church membership. It shall be the responsibility of the Personnel Committee to develop job descriptions according to need. A job description, approved by the church, for each staff member shall be kept on file in the church office. Any change is to be sanctioned by the church. All non-pastoral staff members are expected to be active members as described in Section 7 above, unless they are members in good standing with other church families. All ministers of the church staff except the Lead Pastor will be confirmed by the church upon the recommendation of the Lead Pastor and the Personnel Committee. The Lead Pastor will be recommended by a Pastor Selection Committee.

This congregation affirms freedom in Christ for all its ministers and members. The Lead Pastor and all of our pastoral staff are free to speak the truth in love, in season and out of season.

Section 1. Lead Pastor

The Lead Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy in the pulpit occurs. This election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose. At least one week's public notice shall be given before the election. (Selection shall be as provided in Section 1A, below.) The Lead Pastor is the leader of the church. As such, the Lead Pastor will work with the church staff, deacons, and other congregational leaders to proclaim the gospel to believers and nonbelievers, lead the church in the achievement of its mission, and minister to the members of the church and other persons of the community. The Lead Pastor will also serve as Chief Executive Officer of the corporation and be in charge of all staff personnel.

The Lead Pastor will ensure that all church staff members receive an annual written performance evaluation consistent with procedures developed by the Personnel Committee. Such evaluation shall be based upon job descriptions, annual goals and objectives, mutually agreed upon church covenant and self-evaluation, and evaluation by the Lead Pastor or the pastor's designee. The Personnel Committee will review all evaluations annually.

The Lead Pastor will receive an annual written performance evaluation. This evaluation will be conducted by a special committee appointed by the Personnel Committee. This group may recommend a vote of confidence by ballot if deemed appropriate.

The Personnel Committee will develop procedures for the termination of the Lead Pastor. These procedures and any amendments must be approved by the church.

Section 1A. Selection Committee for Lead Pastor

This committee shall consist of five (5) members working as a group. This committee shall be elected during a called business meeting for this purpose only. A minimum of ten (10) nominations shall be made from the floor. Only active members are eligible to nominate and be nominated. Consideration should be given that those chosen for the selection committee fairly represent the demographics of the church at the time of their selection. Voting will be by secret ballot. In the first round of voting, any nominee receiving 51 percent of the vote or more will be elected to the committee. If after the first round of voting, however, there are not five nominees receiving 51 percent of the vote, a second round of voting will be required for the remaining nominees. If after the second round of voting, there still are not enough nominees receiving 51 percent of the vote to fill the committee, a third round of voting will be required. In the third round of voting, nominees receiving the most votes will be the ones elected to the remaining open positions on the committee.

Once the Selection Committee is formed, it shall elect its own chairperson. The committee shall ensure that there is adequate pulpit supply for the church. If the committee determines that an interim pastor is needed, the committee shall present at least three (3) interim candidates to preach for that call. Voting for the interim shall be at or immediately following a Sunday morning worship service, and the interim shall be confirmed based on majority vote.

It shall be the work of the Selection Committee to recruit candidates for the Lead Pastor position. The committee shall bring to consideration of the church only one candidate at a time, and each nomination shall be the unanimous decision of the committee. The committee shall schedule the recommended candidate to speak to and interact with the congregation before a vote is taken. Voting shall take place at or immediately following a Sunday morning worship service, and the Lead Pastor shall be confirmed based on majority vote. Voting shall be by secret ballot.

Section 2. Other Ministerial Staff

All pastoral staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such pastoral and ministerial positions. The Personnel Committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate the services of pastoral and ministerial staff in consultation with the Lead Pastor. A job description written by the Personnel Committee will be approved by the church and recorded in the minutes of the church. All staff members will be subject to an annual job performance evaluation as set forth in Section 1 above.

Section 3. Weekday Preschool Director

As long as our church operates a weekday preschool, the church will employ a Weekday Preschool Director in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Section 5 of Part IV of this Constitution governing the Preschool Leadership Council.

Section 4. Treasurer

A Church Treasurer shall be employed as the church determines the need for services. The Personnel Committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate the services of the Church Treasurer in consultation with the Stewardship Committee and the Lead Pastor. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of purchase orders approved and signed by authorized personnel, all monies or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the church at each business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The treasurer's report and records shall be audited as directed by the Stewardship Committee, by the church auditor, or one appointed by the church. Upon rendering the audited account with acceptance and approval of the church, the records shall be delivered to the church clerk and kept in the files of the church.

Section 5. Non-Ministerial Staff Members

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for services. The Personnel Committee shall have the authority to employ and to terminate the services of non-ministerial staff members. These staff members shall include secretaries, musicians, custodians and other personnel as the need arises. Such employment and termination of service shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the church.

III. Designated Church Leaders

All who serve as designated church leaders of the church shall be active members of this church. Unless otherwise stated within the respective sections below, these designated church leaders will be nominated annually by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church.

Section 1. Deacon Care Leaders

I. Qualification of a deacon:

1. A deacon is a person of genuine and growing Christian experience. (Acts 6:3)
2. A deacon possesses depth of insight, Christian understanding and judgment in the practical issues of life. (Acts 6:3)
3. A deacon's attitude toward the church and the Kingdom of God is marked by vision filled with hope, faith and good will. A deacon will be faithful to responsibilities and exhibit a positive attitude toward the church and its total enterprises. (Acts 6:5)
4. A deacon's reputation in the community is above reproach in integrity and ethical conduct. (1 Tim. 3:8)
5. A deacon strives to speak the simple truth in love at all times and under all circumstances. (1 Tim. 3:8)
6. A deacon strives to be temperate in all personal habits and behavior. (1 Tim. 3:8)
7. A deacon is committed to the conviction of God's ownership of all things, the development of a growing sense of stewardship in personal experiences, and a practice of the Biblical principle of the tithe as the minimum standard of giving. (1 Tim. 3:8)
8. A deacon is committed to the full gospel of Jesus Christ as the ultimate answer to both personal and social needs of the world. (1 Tim. 3:8)
9. A deacon is one whose life has been tested and found dependable and trustworthy in the church and community. (1 Tim. 3:10)
10. A deacon's home relationships are exemplary and wholesome. (1 Tim. 3:11-13)

II. Duties of a Deacon

In the New Testament, deacons were chosen to serve and to assist the pastoral leadership in ministry.

1. Deacons will be leaders in fulfilling the responsibilities of membership as directed in Article I, Section 7, of these By-laws.
2. Deacons will minister to our church family each year based on the assignments as given by the Deacon Leadership Team.
3. Deacons will attend annual training sessions in preparation for ministry.
4. Deacons will help in receiving the offerings and administering the Lord's Supper.
5. Deacons will actively support the church through regular attendance at all services, revivals, Bible studies, and other special emphases.
6. Deacons are to help build congregational morale.
7. Deacons will be involved in the evangelistic outreach of the church.
8. Deacons will attend all deacon meetings.

9. Deacons will be supportive of the pastoral team and staff.
- III. The church will strive to have the number of deacons based on 10% of the present active church membership.
 - IV. A deacon shall be elected for a maximum of three (3) years and is ineligible for re-election to active status until the lapse of at least one year. Anyone serving an unexpired term is also ineligible for re-election to active status until the lapse of at least one year.
 - V. A deacon election committee will be nominated by the Nominating Committee to select and present possible deacon candidates to the church for election. This committee will be composed of five (5) members.
 1. One committee member will be a currently active deacon who is scheduled to rotate off the active status at the time the newly elected deacons take office.
 2. One person must be a member of a deacon election committee from the previous year.
 3. Three persons will be representative of the age and gender constituency of the church.
 - VI. Duties of the Deacon Election Committee
 1. The committee will determine the number of anticipated vacancies.
 2. Members of the committee will familiarize themselves with the qualifications of a deacon.
 3. During the month of April, they will compile a list of prospects which includes those who express a desire to serve as well as names suggested by church members. All names must be submitted in writing and signed to be considered by the committee.
 4. Prospects and their qualifications will be prayerfully considered.
 5. Prospects will be contacted in person by this committee and given a list of qualifications and duties of a deacon. The prospect shall be requested to prayerfully consider serving as a deacon, be given a reasonable period of time, and then contacted again. Those who feel led by God to serve will be considered by the committee as deacon candidates.
 6. Candidates who agree to be considered for active deacon duties must attend a special meeting to be called by the committee for the purpose of interviewing each candidate and answering any questions each candidate may have. Only deacons, church staff, and deacon candidates will be in attendance. Those candidates who are confirmed by a majority of the deacons and staff in attendance will be presented to the church family at the next Sunday morning worship service for prayerful consideration and confirmation.
 7. The names of those candidates will be placed on a written ballot. Those receiving the highest vote in descending order will fill the vacancies. In the case of a tie to fill a vacancy, a ballot will be voted on the following Sunday. The ballots will be counted by the following people: chairman of deacons, chairman of the nominating committee, and chairman of the deacon election committee. Results of the balloting will be reported by the chairman of deacons – first to those selected, then those not selected, and then to the church at large.

Section 2. Trustees

The Trustees shall be composed of six (6) members. They will hold in trust all property of the church. They will have the legal responsibility or power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property after the church, by specific vote of each action, has given authorization for each action. They shall be responsible for seeing that adequate insurance is purchased and kept on all church property. The chairman of the trustees, by virtue of such office, will serve as president of the corporation during the time that he or she is chairman of trustees. It would be advisable for this committee to be alert to property

evaluations, sales, zoning restrictions and changes, rights of way, and relationships between governmental agencies in the local area. When the signatures of trustees are required, they shall sign legal documents related to church approved matters.

Section 3. Clerk

The Clerk shall be present at all business meetings. She or he shall ensure that a quorum is present at all business meetings (see Quorum, By-laws, Section 10). The Clerk shall, at the direction of the church, keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church and sign appropriate documents requiring a clerk's signature. The original of the minutes and attachments shall be kept in the church office. Many clerical responsibilities may be delegated to a church secretary, if the church so desires, to assist the elected Clerk.

Section 4. Parliamentarian

The Parliamentarian shall be elected by the church to serve at all business meetings of the church and shall guide all actions of the church by Robert's Rules of Order as stipulated under V, Meetings, Section 3, below. In the absence of the Parliamentarian during a business meeting, a temporary parliamentarian may be appointed by the moderator.

Section 5. Host or Hostess

This person and/or persons will collaborate with the church staff and other church leaders to assist in the scheduling and coordinating of all social functions of the church. Anytime a church function or other event involves the use of the church's on-campus kitchen facilities, the host or hostess will be notified so that he or she can help oversee such usage.

Section 6. Librarian (Or Media Center Director)

The Librarian shall have the responsibility of directing the operation of the Church Library and/or Media Center. He/she shall make a diligent effort to secure, process, and distribute materials to aid in the teaching ministries of the church. This person will also secure appropriate reading and listening materials for the spiritual enrichment and enjoyment of the entire church membership. Efforts will be made to encourage use of the library.

Section 7. Representative to the Association Executive Committee

A person shall be elected annually to represent the church in all local Baptist Association affairs that require church representation. This person shall also give reports to the church on associational activities.

Section 8. Other Designated Church Leaders

Such other designated church leaders may be established as the need arises for carrying out the various ministries and services of the church. The request for such other designated church leader must come by recommendation of the Pastoral Staff and presented to the church for approval at a regular business meeting for confirmation. The leader's responsibilities will be defined by the church staff and kept on file with the list of duties and responsibilities of Designated Church Leaders. When the church staff determines that such other designated church leader position is no longer necessary, the leadership position may be terminated by confirmation of the church at a regular business meeting.

IV. Committees

All church committee members must be active members of this church. They will be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church, unless otherwise specified or stated within these by-laws. Committee members shall serve on a three-year rotation basis unless otherwise noted below.

Section 1. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of six members serving on a three-year rotation with two members rotating off each year after three years of service. The Pastoral Staff shall appoint the Nominating Committee (to fill the vacancies) in April prior to the annual election of officers in September. The Nominating Committee shall include all Pastoral Staff members (ex-officio). The duty of

this committee shall be to bring to the church nominations of officers and committees as provided for herein. The committee shall search the church roll and the Sunday School roll to discover persons suitable for office and tactfully obtain from members suggestions of persons to serve in various offices. The staff, team leaders and directors of departments will be consulted and asked to participate in securing volunteers for their ministry areas respective needs. Every person nominated shall be a professing Christian. For those considered for designated leadership positions, they must be an active member and in good standing. Persons considered for any position will first be approved by the nominating committee before being approached for recruitment. The Nominating Committee shall present to the church for election all who accept the invitation to serve. Once the committees are confirmed, each committee will have a chairperson to be selected by the individual committees.

Section 2. Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee shall consist of six members nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. The members will serve on a three-year rotation and shall be staggered so that two members rotate off every year after three years of service. The Personnel Committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration, including all human resource related matters. Their work includes such areas as determining staff needs, employment, termination, salaries, benefits, other compensation, policies, job descriptions, yearly evaluations and personnel services which shall include maintaining an organization chart indicating supervisory duties. As the Chief Executive Officer of the church, the Lead Pastor will work closely with this committee.

Section 3. Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee shall consist of six members to be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. The members will serve on a three-year rotation and shall be staggered so that two members rotate off every year after three years of service. This committee develops and recommends an overall stewardship development plan that promotes scriptural giving by the entire membership of the church. The duties of this committee shall be as follows:

1. To supervise the raising of all money in the church and have supervision over the expenditures of the same which includes the preparation of an annual budget.
2. To count monies collected and contributed to the church on a weekly basis. The six members of the committee will serve on a weekly rotation for the counting of monies and may be assisted by additional counters as needed. The additional counters, if any, will be selected each year by the committee, and will be approved by the church to serve on a three-year rotation. The committee will do its best to protect confidentiality and to ensure that the counting and handling of monies are always done with at least two people per weekly rotation.

All monies collected shall be duly reported and turned into the church treasurer to be counted as outlined above, with the exception of individual class treasuries and scholarship funds for which the sponsoring organization shall be responsible. Special offerings and fund-raising projects shall have the approval of the church.

3. To approve all contracts for supplies, materials, salaries or services, pledging the credit of the church. No such contracts or pledging of credit shall be made except upon approval of the committee unless authorized by direct vote of the church, or as otherwise provided in paragraphs Nos. 7 and 8 below. All expenditures shall be made only on authorization of the Stewardship Committee except as otherwise provided in paragraphs Nos. 7 and 8 below.
4. To review and approve all bills coming to the church for payment. If the bill arises from an expenditure that is not covered by the church budget, that bill will be presented to the Stewardship Committee for further investigation. If the bill is approved, then the church treasurer will issue a check to pay for the bill.
5. To oversee the payments for supplies, materials and services as follows: All payments shall be

made by the church treasurer on invoices and/or check requests approved by the chairperson of the Stewardship Committee. This also includes items which may be authorized any time by direct vote of the church. There shall be two signers on all checks drawn. All persons who sign checks on behalf of the church will be covered by the church's liability policy for theft/dishonesty up to \$25,000.

6. To provide for an audit of all books and accounts of the church, including the weekday preschool, by an auditor (internal or external) at least every three (3) years, and otherwise as the committee deems appropriate.
7. To make budget provisions for staff members to have adequate funds for use in carrying out the daily ministries of the church. Staff members shall have the authority to contract for supplies, materials, or services, pledging the credit of the church, within the context of the annual budget as it relates to their particular ministry area. Staff members will ensure that there is sufficient cash on hand prior to entering into any financial contracts or other purchases.
8. To protect the cash flow of the church by overseeing the spending of all church staff and committees. For staff spending, see paragraph seven above. Unless otherwise provided, committee expenditures shall be limited to \$200 without prior approval by the Stewardship Committee. For the Building and Grounds Committee, expenditures above \$750 shall not be made without prior approval by the Stewardship Committee. For Building and Ground expenditures above \$5,000, and that exceed what has been contemplated in the church budget, prior church approval will be necessary except in cases of emergency.

Section 4. Building and Grounds

The Building and Grounds Committee shall be composed of at least eight (8) members elected annually by the church. They shall assist the church in matters relating to properties and equipment administration. Its duties include such areas as maintaining all church properties ready for use, recommending policies regarding the use of properties, working under the administrative officer and other staff members of the church regarding the needs for, and employment of, contract maintenance personnel. This committee will be responsible for supervising maintenance, landscaping, and custodial providers unless otherwise stated in other personnel job descriptions.

Section 5. Preschool Leadership Council

As long as our church operates a weekday preschool and other preschool and nursery ministries, the church Nominating Committee will appoint a Preschool Leadership Council to consist of six (6) members who will serve on a three-year rotation, with two members rotating off each year after three years of service. This council will assist the Children's Minister and Preschool Director with general administration and oversight of the following: (1) The weekday preschool and (2) all other preschool and nursery ministries of the church.

On behalf of the weekday preschool, the council's duties shall include assisting the Children's Minister and Preschool Director with the following:

- Hiring a Preschool Director should that person be separate from the Children's Minister;
- Hiring teachers and other staff, as needed, for the preschool;
- Overseeing the yearly preschool budget, including expenditures and receipts to and from the preschool, and to assist with the audit requirement in Section 3 above.
- Establishing and carrying out all necessary policies and procedures for the preschool; and
- Other reasonable duties for the preschool as needed.

On behalf of all other preschool and nursery ministries of the church, the council's duties shall include assisting the Children's Minister with the following:

- Establishing and carrying out all necessary policies, procedures and regulations;
- Providing equipment and supplies in accordance with the church budget;

- Hiring paid nursery workers as needed and in accordance with the church budget; and
- Recruiting, training, and scheduling volunteers as needed

Section 6. Other Committees

Such other committees that are necessary for carrying out the ministries and operations of this church shall be established as the need arises. The Nominating Committee, on approval of the church, shall appoint such committees. The responsibilities of these committees will be defined as each committee is formed and will be written down and kept on file by the Nominating Committee. Care shall be given to assure that no one person will serve on more committees than practical at one time. Where the need of a certain committee is no longer necessary, the Nominating Committee may recommend to the church that such committee be terminated.

V. MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship

Our church shall have consistent weekly gatherings for worship and fellowship to be scheduled and approved as the church sees fit. In the event of emergency cancellations such as for weather or mechanical failure, the pastoral staff will decide such after having consulted the chairman of deacons. Announcements will be made over appropriate media and communication.

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once each quarter at a time selected by the pastoral staff and Chairman of Deacons and at times as deemed appropriate by the pastoral staff or Chairman of Deacons. The pastoral staff and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper, and the deacons are responsible for the physical preparations.

Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church. The pastor, or whomever the pastor shall authorize, shall administer baptism. (See By-laws under Church Membership, Section 2).

The church will strive to have other yearly gathering moments or events, on or off the church campus, with the goal of building new relationships and encouraging current members.

Section 2. Business Meeting

The lead pastor shall be the moderator of business meetings. In the absence of the pastor, the Chairman of Deacons shall preside. In the absence of both of these, the clerk shall call the church to order, and a moderator pro-tem shall be elected. The regular business meetings of the church shall be held on the third Wednesday night of each month during prayer service time. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members or upon the transfer of membership to other churches or upon the appointment of delegates to conventions, but it is not allowed to act on other business. The pastor shall announce from the pulpit on Sunday, any called business meetings, giving at least one week's notice, clearly stating the purpose of the meeting. Called meetings can only address the subjects announced in the call.

All business meetings of this church are open to all members at all times. All such meetings must be publicized through regular church channels. The required minimum number of members present for conducting business will be: Six (6) percent of the active membership shall constitute a quorum except for the call or dismissal of the lead pastor or for all matters of discipline and amendments to the constitution and by-laws. In those specific cases where twenty-five (25) percent of the active membership shall be required for a quorum. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority vote unless otherwise provided.

The annual report to the local Baptist Association shall be presented to the church in the September business meeting each year.

Section 3. Rules of Order.

The business of this church shall be transacted according to the rules of Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 4. Order of Business

The business meeting will be called to order by the moderator, and business will proceed in the following order:

1. Establish whether there is a quorum
2. Present minutes of previous regular meeting and/or special called meetings
3. Approve or correct the minutes
4. Address unfinished or ongoing business
5. Present offices and department head reports as necessary
6. Present committee and team reports as necessary
7. Address new business if any
8. Make acknowledgements and announcements as needed
9. Conduct other such church business as needed
10. Adjourn

A re-arrangement of the above order may be made by the moderator with the consent of the meeting attendants.

VI. Organizations

The church shall maintain ministries of worship, disciple-making, leadership training, and missions. All organizations related to these ministries shall have appropriate leadership subject to church coordination and approval. The church shall provide all resources for the appropriate advancement of these ministries. While the strategies for carrying out these ministries may change for improved effectiveness, the church will encourage ministries for weekly worship gatherings, opportunities for all ages to learn, sing and play music, Bible study small groups and/or Sunday School, Men's & Women's Ministries, and church leadership training.

VII. Discipline

The pastoral team, church staff, deacons, and other church members will be available for counsel, encouragement, and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption and restoration rather than punishment. Should any situation exist which may cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastoral team and the deacons will work to resolve the problem in accordance with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present at the next regular business meeting is required for such action. The church may then proceed to declare that the person is no longer in good standing with church membership. All such proceedings shall be conducted with grace, sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, Christian kindness and forbearance. The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

VIII. Church Leadership Council

The Church Leadership Council shall be a consistent way to rally all of the church leadership together to coordinate the various ministries of the church. The council will be led by the lead pastor and/or a chairperson to be selected by the council. The council shall establish the annual and long-term goals of the church. The council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall be composed of the pastoral team, church staff, designated church leaders, committee leaders, and all those who are apprenticing or being raised up for church leadership. The council shall meet monthly or quarterly, as may be desired or on call of the lead pastor or chairperson at any time deemed appropriate. All matters agreed upon by the council that require a vote by the church shall be presented at a business meeting.

IX. Liability

The church adopts the “Tort Reform Act of 1987” as provided by Section 51-1-20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, providing immunity from civil liability in certain cases.

X. Amendments

Every five years, the Lead Pastor shall appoint a new committee of five members to review this constitution. A report shall be made to the church after reviewing whether or not changes need to be made. If changes are deemed necessary, this committee shall become the constitution committee. If no changes need to be made, the committee will be dissolved.

Changes to the Constitution and By-laws shall be made in the following manner:

At a regular business meeting, copies of a proposed amendment shall be given to each member present, for reading, consideration, and discussion. Copies of the proposed amendment shall be made available to each member either electronically or in writing. At the regular business meeting of the following month, the proposed amendment shall be presented for a vote. See paragraph two of the section on Business Meetings for what constitutes a quorum. If necessary to constitute a quorum, the proposed amendment shall be presented at a Sunday morning worship service for a vote.