

Constitution and Bylaws



Present Building - 1976



Original Building - 1881

Second Building - 1890

Third Building - 1928

Bethany Baptist Church

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*** *Founded 1879* ***

Document Version Control

Approval Date	Version	Editors	Description of Changes
09/16/2007	1.0	<p>Constitution Committee: Beve Anderson, Tim Bieber (secretary), Mike Eggiman, Pastor Bernard Fritzke (Pastor Emeritus), Jim Rollock, Pat Willey (chairman), Laura Zurbrugg.</p> <p>Overseer Board: Dr. Duane Dunham (interim pastor), Bill Edens, Vicki Edens (Clerk), Mike Eggiman, Randy Eggiman, Dale Fishback, Dean Fritzke (chairman), Dean Martin, Jim Rhodes, Craig Shimel, Gary Zurbrugg.</p>	Approved by Overseer Board on September 12, 2007 for submission to church membership for approval.
04/26/2009	1.1	<p>Constitution and Policy Committee: Tim Bieber (secretary), Mike Eggiman, Dean Fritzke, Kristin Jacoshenk, Rev. Christopher Johnson (Senior Pastor), Sylvia Rhodes, Pat Willey (chairman).</p> <p>Church Council: Beve Anderson, Rev. Ivan Annis, Tim Bieber, Vicki Edens (Clerk), Mike Eggiman, Rev Bernard Fritzke (Pastor Emeritus), Lynn Howard, Rev. Christopher Johnson (Senior Pastor), Jim Rhodes (chairman), Linda Smith, Chris Willey, Gary Zurbrugg, Linda Zurbrugg.</p>	Article 8 - Elections, Section 2- Resignation and Dismissal of Pastors. Approved by church membership at April 26, 2009 Quarterly Business Meeting.
06/14/2009	1.2	<p>Constitution and Policy Committee: Tim Bieber (secretary), Mike Eggiman, Dean Fritzke, Kristin Jacoshenk, Rev. Christopher Johnson (Senior Pastor), Sylvia Rhodes, Pat Willey (chairman).</p> <p>Church Council: Beve Anderson, Rev. Ivan Annis, Tim Bieber, Vicki Edens (Clerk), Mike Eggiman, Rev Bernard Fritzke (Pastor Emeritus), Lynn Howard, Rev. Christopher Johnson (Senior Pastor), Jim Rhodes (chairman), Linda Smith, Chris Willey, Gary Zurbrugg, Linda Zurbrugg.</p>	Article 4 – Membership, Section 4.1 – Active Member Status, Section 4.2 Inactive Member Status, Section 6 – Removal of Members and moved Section 4.3 – Status for Members Under Discipline to Section 5.1 and Article A-18. Approved by church membership at June 14, 2009 Annual Business Meeting.
01/30/2011	1.3	<p>Constitution and Policy Committee: Tim Bieber (secretary), Dean Fritzke (Chairman), Kristin Jacoshenk, Sylvia Rhodes, Pat Willey, Laura Zurbrugg.</p> <p>Church Council: Rev. Ivan Annis, Roxy Annis, Tim Bieber, Bill Edens, Vicki Edens (Clerk), Rev Bernard Fritzke (Pastor Emeritus), Mike Howard, Jim Rhodes (chairman), Lindsey Shimel, Lindsay Siefken, Pat Willey, Chris Zurbrugg, Gary Zurbrugg.</p>	<p>Core Beliefs, Article 4 – Membership, Section 6 – Removal of Members, Article 8 – Elections, Section 3 – Selection of Officers, Article 6 – Committees, Section 1.3 – Constitution and Policy, Article x – Meetings, Section 4 – Business Meetings of the Church Council;</p> <p>Approved by church membership at January 30, 2011 Business Meeting.</p>
06/26/2011	1.4	<p>Constitution and Policy Committee: Tim Bieber (secretary), Dean Fritzke (Chairman), Kristin Jacoshenk, Sylvia Rhodes, Pat Willey, Laura Zurbrugg.</p> <p>Church Council: Rev. Ivan Annis, Roxy Annis, Tim Bieber, Bill Edens, Vicki Edens (Clerk), Rev Bernard Fritzke (Pastor Emeritus), Mike Howard, Jim Rhodes (chairman), Lindsey Shimel, Lindsay Siefken, Pat Willey, Chris Zurbrugg, Gary Zurbrugg.</p>	<p>Article 5, Sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, Article 10, Section 5 and Appendix C Ordination of Pastors.</p> <p>Approved by church membership at June 26, 2011 Business Meeting.</p>
06/26/2016	1.5	<p>Constitution and Policy Committee: Tim Bieber (secretary), Mike Eggiman (Chairman), Sandy Lozada, Laura Martin, Dan McCorkle, Jeff Welch (Senior Pastor), Laura Zurbrugg.</p> <p>Church Council: Gayle Bieber, Tim Bieber, Bill Edens, Vicki Edens (Clerk), Mike Eggiman, Rev Bernard Fritzke (Pastor Emeritus), Barry Jacoshenk, Cy Moehl, Jim Rhodes (chairman), Fran Rulis, Lindsey Shimel, Lindsay Siefken, Stephen Stoller, Jeff Welch (Senior Pastor).</p>	<p>Changed “God’s Word” to “the Bible”; changed “Man” to “Mankind” where context appropriate, updated A18-Family to A18-Marriage, Sexuality, and Family.</p> <p>Approved by church membership at June 26, 2016 Business Meeting.</p>

Approval Date	Version	Editors	Description of Changes
04/30/2017	1.6	<p>Constitution and Policy Committee: Tim Bieber (secretary), Laura Martin, Kristen Orr, Fran Rulis, Jeff Welch (Senior Pastor), Laura Zurbrugg (Chairman).</p> <p>Church Council: Gayle Bieber, Tim Bieber, Pam Davis, Bill Edens, Mike Eggiman, Barry Jacoshenk, Jim Rhodes (chairman), Sylvia Rhodes, Fran Rulis, Lindsay Siefken (Clerk), Stephen Stoller, Cari Welch, Jeff Welch (Senior Pastor).</p>	<p>Updated Figure 1 and Article 5, Section 4 to add "Outreach".</p> <p>Added Article 5, Section 4.6 Outreach.</p> <p>Updated Article 5, Section 4.5, "Missions" to be consistent with Section 4.6 Outreach.</p> <p>Changed all references from "seven (7)" to "eight (8)" deacons: Article 5, Section 2, Article 5, Section 4, Article 7, Section 3.1, Article 8, Section 3, Appendix B, Paragraph B15.</p>
02/16/2020	1.7	<p>Constitution and Policy Committee: Tim Bieber (secretary), Laura Martin, Dan McCorkle, Jim Rhodes (Chairman), Jeff Welch (Senior Pastor), Laura Zurbrugg.</p> <p>Church Council: Gayle Bieber, Bill Edens (Chairman), Mike Eggiman, Nick Johnson, Joseph Kilada, Dan McCorkle, Jim Rhodes, Sylvia Rhodes, Carrie Stoller (Clerk), Cari Welch, Jeff Welch (Senior Pastor), Gary Zurbrugg.</p>	<p>Clarified language, corrected typos, closed loopholes, and changed wording to reflect current practice including:</p> <p>Expanded definition of "Inactive Member Status" to include both absence from worship service and church discipline.</p> <p>Overhauled church discipline process.</p> <p>Added language that only Clerk (or someone temporarily authorized by the Council) can sign contracts on behalf of BBC.</p> <p>Council instead of CapComm names parliamentarian for each business meeting of the church membership.</p> <p>Added preference should be given to Office Manager to be Clerk.</p> <p>Moved responsibility for rosters from Congregation Care to Clerk.</p> <p>Allowed lay elders to be paid for pulpit supply.</p> <p>Clarified that portions of a one (1) year term count as a one (1) full year term for the purpose of eligibility.</p> <p>Deacon of Congregation Care "ensures" a monthly report of the Benevolent Fund is submitted to the Church Council rather than requiring they do it themselves (Office Manager actually develops the report).</p> <p>Clarify no term limits for members-at-large for Auditing Committee.</p> <p>Changed audit from every year to a 2 year process.</p> <p>Clarify term limits for Constitution and Policy Committee.</p> <p>Added startup process for first Council meeting.</p> <p>Added step in Elections process for how to handle nomination forms.</p> <p>Clarified Elections Committee appeals procedures.</p> <p>Eliminated out-of-date hyperlinks in Bibliography.</p>

Approval Date	Version	Editors	Description of Changes
06/28/2020	1.8	Constitution and Policy Committee: Tim Bieber (secretary), Laura Martin, Dan McCorkle, Jim Rhodes (Chairman), Jeff Welch (Senior Pastor), Laura Zurbrugg. Church Council: Gayle Bieber, Bill Edens (Chairman), Mike Eggiman, Nick Johnson, Joseph Kilada, Dan McCorkle, Jim Rhodes, Sylvia Rhodes, Carrie Stoller (Clerk), Cari Welch, Jeff Welch (Senior Pastor), Gary Zurbrugg.	Added Article 7 Section 6 – Unusual Circumstances, Electronic or Alternate Format Meetings, and Quorum Reductions

The most recently approved constitution supersedes and cancels all previous constitutions of the Bethany Baptist Church of Portland, Oregon.

REFERENCES

Oregon Articles of Incorporation

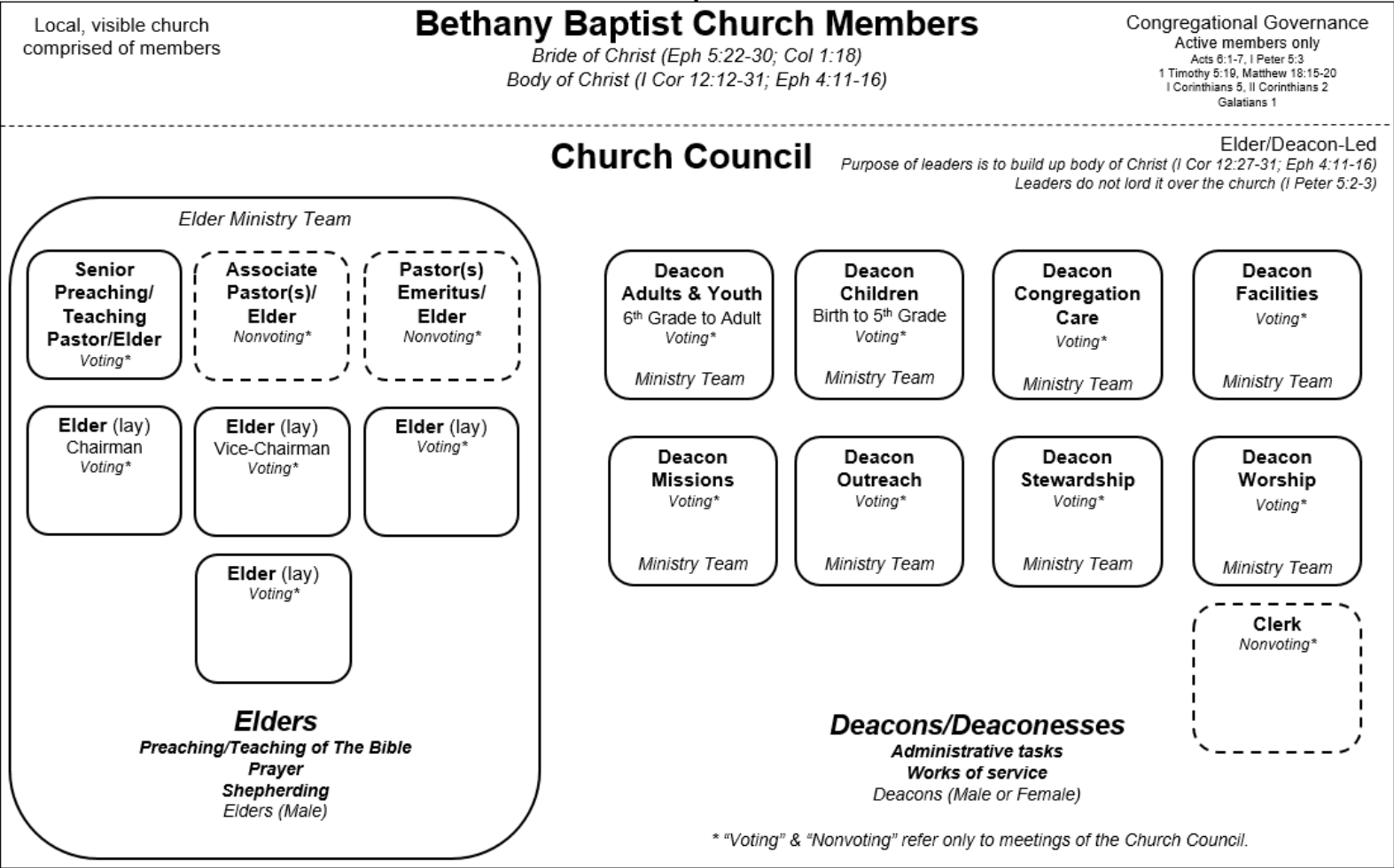
TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURE 1 - CHURCH GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE	8
FIGURE 2 – KEY ANNUAL EVENTS TIMELINE.....	9
PREAMBLE	10
CORE BELIEFS.....	10
ARTICLE 1 – NAME.....	13
ARTICLE 2 – PURPOSE	13
ARTICLE 3 – DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION.....	13
ARTICLE 4 – MEMBERSHIP	13
Section 1 – Qualifications.....	13
Section 2 – Expectations of a Member.....	13
Section 3 –The Membership Process.....	14
Section 4 – Membership Status.....	14
Section 4.1 – Active Member Status	15
Section 4.2 – Inactive Member Status.....	15
Section 5 – Discipline of Members	16
Section 6 – Removal of Members	17
Section 7 – Verification of Membership	18
ARTICLE 5 – ORGANIZATION AND OFFICERS.....	18
Section 1 – Overview	18
Section 2 – Church Council.....	18
Section 2.1 – Clerk.....	21
Section 3 – Elder Ministry Team.....	21
Section 3.1 – Senior Pastor.....	22
Section 3.2 – Associate Pastor(s)	23
Section 3.3 – Pastor(s) Emeritus.....	23
Section 3.4 – Interim Pastor	24
Section 3.5 – Lay Elders	24
Section 4 – Deacon Ministry Teams.....	26
Section 4.1 – Adults and Youth Ministry Team	27
Section 4.2 – Children Ministry Team.....	27
Section 4.3 – Congregation Care Ministry Team	28
Section 4.4 – Facilities Ministry Team	29
Section 4.5 – Missions Ministry Team	29
Section 4.6 – Outreach Ministry Team	29
Section 4.7 – Stewardship Ministry Team	30
Section 4.7.1 – Financial Secretary.....	30
Section 4.7.2 – Treasurer.....	31
Section 4.8 – Worship Ministry Team.....	31
Section 5 – Non-Pastoral Compensated Ministry Staff	32
ARTICLE 6 – COMMITTEES	33

Section 1 – Standing Committees	33
Section 1.1 – Elections Committee.....	33
Section 1.2 – Auditing Committee	33
Section 1.3 – Constitution and Policy Committee	34
Section 2 – Resignation or Dismissal of Auditing or Constitution and Policy Committee Members.....	35
Section 3 – Vacancies for Auditing or Constitution and Policy Committee Members	35
Section 4 – Temporary Committees	36
ARTICLE 7 – MEETINGS	36
Section 1 – Fiscal Year	36
Section 2 – Worship Meetings.....	36
Section 3 – Business Meetings of the Church Membership.....	36
Section 3.1 – Annual Business Meeting	37
Section 3.2 – Quarterly Business Meetings	38
Section 3.3 – Special Business Meetings.....	38
Section 3.4 – Petition-Called Business Meetings	38
Section 4 –Business Meetings of the Church Council	39
Section 5 – All Other Groups and Meetings	40
Section 6 – Unusual Circumstances, Electronic or Alternate Format Meetings, and Quorum Reductions.....	40
ARTICLE 8 – ELECTIONS.....	41
Section 1 – Process for Calling a Pastor	41
Section 2 – Resignation and Dismissal of Pastors	43
Section 3 – Selection of Lay Elders, Deacons, and Elections Committee Members-at-Large.....	43
Section 4 – Resignation or Dismissal of Lay Elders and Deacons.....	45
Section 5 – Vacancies for Lay Elder and Deacon.....	45
Section 6 – Resignation or Dismissal of Elections Committee Members	45
Section 7 – Vacancies for Elections Committee Members.....	46
Section 8 – Resignation or Dismissal of Pastor Search Committee Members	46
Section 9 – Vacancies for Pastor Search Committee Members.....	46
ARTICLE 9 – AMENDMENTS.....	46
ARTICLE 10 – CHURCH PROPERTY	46
Section 1 – Purchase or Encumbrance of Debt.....	46
Section 2 – Sale.....	47
Section 3 – Long-Term Lease or Rental.....	47
Section 4 – Short-Term Lease or Rental	47
Section 5 – Dissolution.....	47
APPENDIX A – DOCTRINAL STATEMENT.....	48
A1 – Introduction.....	48
A2 – The Bible	49
A3 – The Godhead.....	50

A4 – God the Father.....	51
A5 – God the Son	51
A6 – God the Holy Spirit.....	53
A7 – Creation	55
A8 – Angels.....	56
A9 – Fallen Angels.....	56
A10 – Mankind	57
A11 – Fall of Mankind	58
A12 – The Great Flood.....	59
A13 – Salvation.....	59
A14 – The Church.....	61
A15 – Governance of Local Congregation.....	62
A16 – Ordinances	63
A17 – Christians in the World.....	64
A18 – Marriage, Sexuality, and Family	66
A19 – Rapture and The Great Tribulation.....	73
A20 – Second Coming of Christ and Establishment of Millennial Kingdom.....	76
A21 – Judgment and Eternity	77
A22 – Conclusion.....	77
APPENDIX B – BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF LOCAL CHURCH GOVERNANCE	79
APPENDIX C – ORDINATION OF PASTORS	83
APPENDIX D – BIBLIOGRAPHY USED TO PREPARE THIS CONSTITUTION	84

Jesus Christ – The Bible
Head of Church, His Bride (Eph 5:22-30; Col 1:18)  *Sufficiency of Scripture (II Timothy 3:16)*



* "Voting" & "Nonvoting" refer only to meetings of the Church Council.

Updated 04-30-2017

FIGURE 1 - CHURCH GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

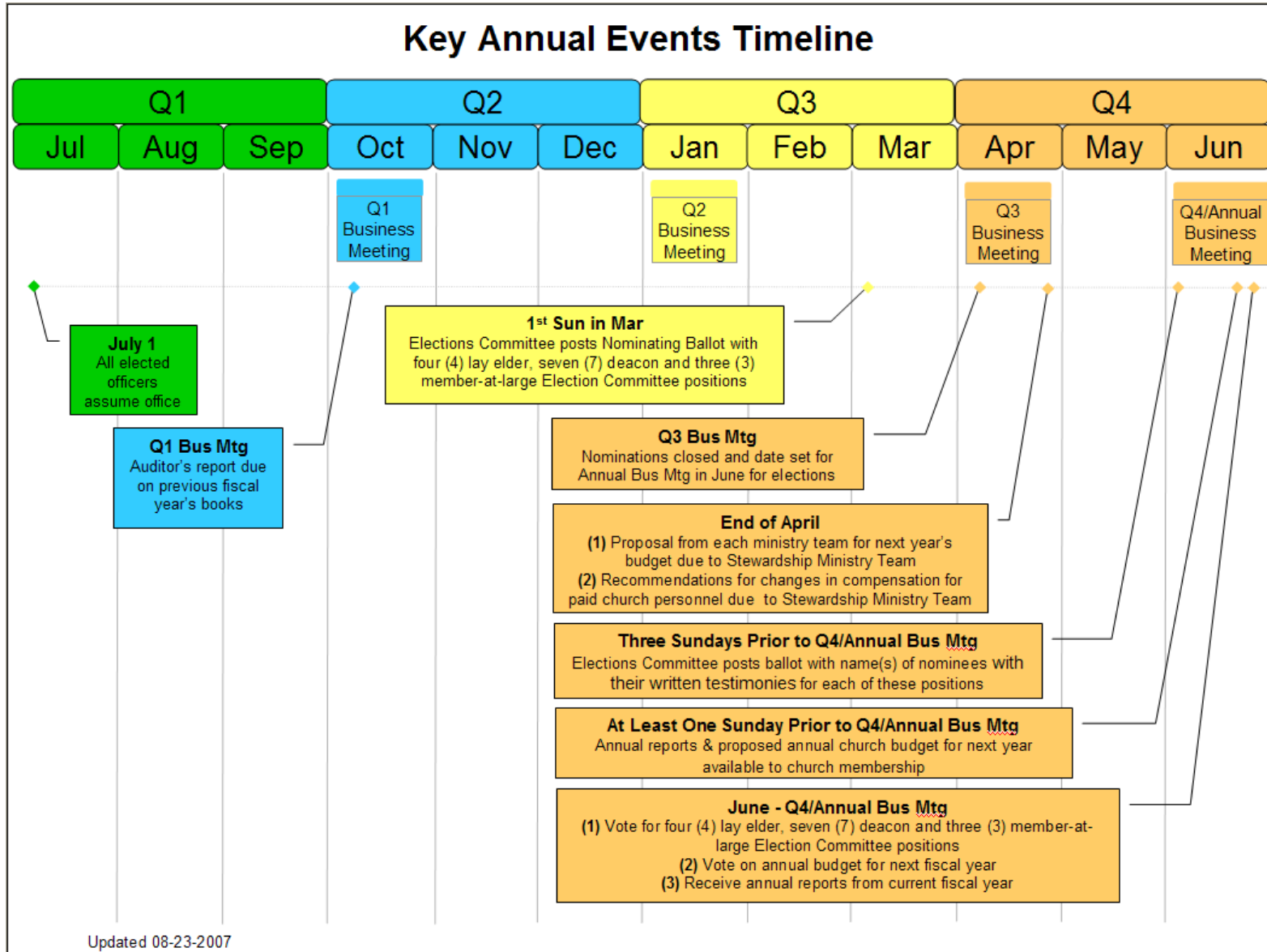


FIGURE 2 – KEY ANNUAL EVENTS TIMELINE

1

PREAMBLE

2 We, the members of Bethany Baptist Church, by the grace of God and for the glory of
3 God, join ourselves together as a group of believers, who have faith in the Lord Jesus
4 Christ, and adopt for our government, plan of worship and service, these core beliefs
5 and articles as our constitution and bylaws.

6

CORE BELIEFS

7 **Overview**

8 All members are required to adhere to our Core Beliefs without reservation. In addition,
9 all officers, pastors, staff, teachers, and members of the Elections, Constitution and
10 Policy, and Pastor Search Committees are required to adhere and to teach only that
11 which is consistent with the Doctrinal Statement (Appendix A). Our purpose is to lead
12 the congregation into the fullness of God's truth. *(Unity of faith: Ephesians 4:11-16)*

13 **The Bible**

14 We believe the Bible is the written Word of God, revealed by the Holy Spirit through
15 human authors, and is without error in the original documents. We believe the events
16 and people are part of actual history. The Bible is absolute truth and the sole standard
17 by which to determine our beliefs, conduct, and knowledge of right and wrong. It is the
18 truth by which God brings people into a saving relationship with Himself, and leads them
19 to Christian maturity. *(Word of God: Matthew 4:4; Truth: John 8:31-32; Life: John 20:31; Inspired by
20 God: II Timothy 3:16-17; Given by Holy Spirit: II Peter 1:20-21)*

21 **Triune God**

22 We believe there is one God who eternally exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son,
23 and Holy Spirit. All three are equal in deity and therefore are worthy of our faith, love,
24 and worship. *(One: Deuteronomy 6:4; Trinity: Matthew 28:19; Worthy: I Timothy 1:17)*

25 **Father**

26 We believe the Father absolutely reigns over all life and history in the universe.
27 We rejoice that He concerns Himself in the affairs of people, and that He hears
28 and answers prayer. He initiated salvation by sending His Son, and He is Father
29 to those who, by faith, accept the payment for the penalty of their sins made on
30 the cross by His Son, Jesus Christ. *(Answers prayer: Matthew 7:11; Sovereign: Psalm
31 103:19; Adopts us: Ephesians 1:5; Answers prayer: Philippians 4:6-7; Calls us children: I John
32 3:1; Knows all: I John 3:20; Sent Son: I John 4:9-10; Reigns: Revelation 19:6)*

33 **Son**

34 We believe the only Son of God became the man Jesus Christ, who was born of
35 the virgin Mary. Being fully God and fully man, He revealed God through His
36 teachings, His miracles, and His sinless life. As a man, He perfectly kept God's
37 Law. His death on the cross was sufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of the
38 whole world. His body was resurrected on the third day according to the

39 Scriptures. After 40 days He ascended to the right hand of the Father, where as
40 High Priest, He continually represents and intercedes for His people. We believe
41 in His imminent return, as He promised. All who have placed their faith in the
42 Lord Jesus Christ will meet Him in the air to be with Him forever. (*Virgin birth:*
43 *Matthew 1:18; Miracles: Matthew 4:23-24; Only Son: John 3:16; Return: Acts 1:11; Intercession:*
44 *Romans 8:34; Burial, Resurrection: I Corinthians 15:3-4; Rapture: I Thessalonians 4:13-18;*
45 *Mediator: I Timothy 2:5; High Priest, Sinless: Hebrews 4:14-15; Advocate, Payment: I John 2:1-2)*

46 **Holy Spirit**

47 We believe the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. When we accept the payment of
48 Jesus Christ for our sin, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. He gives us
49 spiritual life, spiritual gifts, teaching, guidance, correction, and the power to live a
50 godly life. (*Convicts: John 16:8; Indwelling: Romans 8:9-11; Teaches: I Corinthians 2:10-13;*
51 *Gifts: I Corinthians 12:1-4; Fruit: Galatians 5:22-23)*

52 **Mankind**

53 We believe God created Adam and Eve in His image, with mind, will, and emotion. They
54 were created without sin and innocent. Adam's disobedience of God's command
55 caused all of humanity to be born with a sin nature, separated from God, and all of
56 creation to be cursed. (*God's image: Genesis 1:26-31; Sinned: Genesis 3; All sin: Romans 3:9-12,*
57 *23; Adam representative: Romans 5:19; Death: Romans 6:23)*

58 **Salvation**

59 God promised Adam that He would send a Savior to conquer sin. It is for this reason
60 that the Lord Jesus Christ came to Earth and entered humanity as our representative.
61 He lived a perfect life, and obeyed all of God's laws completely. While on the cross, God
62 the Father made God the Son, Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we
63 might become the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. Each person must make a
64 choice. They can either reject Jesus Christ's payment and eternally be separated from
65 God, or accept His payment and spend eternity with God. His payment is offered to us
66 as a free gift, and we accept it by faith alone. Jesus Christ is the only mediator through
67 whom God may be approached. (*Promise: Genesis 3:15; Payment: Romans 3:23-26; Love:*
68 *Romans 5:8; Life: I Corinthians 15:22; Knew no sin: II Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 2:20; Free gift:*
69 *Ephesians 2:8-9; Mediator: I Timothy 2:5)*

70 **Church**

71 We believe that all who have put their faith in Jesus Christ are members of the one body
72 of Jesus Christ, the Church. We believe that the members of the body of Jesus Christ
73 are to meet together in local congregations for the purpose of glorifying God in worship,
74 prayer, instruction from Scripture for spiritual growth and development, and fellowship.
75 By means of the Holy Spirit and this instruction, our members will know how to and will
76 seek to live godly lives. They will desire to be an example of a believer to those around
77 them and will be ready to answer those who ask the reason for their faith in Jesus
78 Christ. They will take the message of Jesus Christ to the community in which they live
79 and work and support those who take the message of Jesus Christ to other parts of the
80 world. (*Witness: Matthew 5:16; Share message: Matthew 28: 19-20; Purpose: Acts 2:40-47; Body of*
81 *Christ: I Corinthians 12:12; Support: Philippians 4:10-19; Assembly: Hebrews 10:25; Testimony: I Peter*
82 *3:15)*

83 **Ordinances**

84 We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances of the
85 church, and that they are a Scriptural means of testimony for the church in this age.
86 Neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper are a means of salvation but are acts of
87 obedience. (*Baptism: Acts 10:48; Lord's Supper: I Corinthians 11:23-26*)

88 **Baptism**

89 Baptism is the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, the
90 Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an outward sign of an inward change in those who
91 have accepted the payment for their sins by Jesus Christ on the cross. Through
92 baptism, we identify ourselves with His death, burial, and resurrection, and
93 commit ourselves to walk in newness of life. (*Commanded: Matthew 28:19; For
94 believers, In name of the Lord: Acts 10:47-48; Sign of inward: Romans 6:3-4*)

95 **Lord's Supper**

96 We celebrate the Lord's Supper as a reminder of Jesus Christ's death and
97 resurrection. Eating the bread and drinking from the cup symbolize His body and
98 blood. Any person who has put their faith in Jesus Christ has the privilege to
99 share in this celebration. (*Reminder, Symbols: Luke 22:19-20; Remembrance, Until return: I
100 Corinthians 11:23-26*)

101 **Governance**

102 Under the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word, our church governs itself
103 congregationally. In order to assist in meeting the spiritual and physical needs within our
104 congregation, church members have organized teams to serve in specific areas of
105 ministry. These ministry teams are led by elders and deacons and/or deaconesses, who
106 meet together as a Church Council, manage the affairs of the church, and present major
107 matters to the church membership for a vote. All final decisions will be determined by a
108 vote of the church membership. (*Court of appeal: Matthew 18:15-20; Work together: Acts 6:3-6;
109 Orderliness; I Corinthians 14:40*)

110 **Lord's Return**

111 We believe in the bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ to meet His Church in the
112 clouds. We believe that after a tribulation period on this earth, Jesus Christ will return to
113 this earth with us, the Church. He will set up His kingdom, and judge the world in
114 righteousness. (*Judge: Psalm 96:13; Kingdom: Zechariah 14:1-11; Bodily and tribulation: Matthew
115 24:27-30; Bodily return: Acts 1:11; Judge: Matthew 25:31-46; Caught up in the air: I Thessalonians 4:16-
116 17*)

117

118

ARTICLE 1 – NAME

119

This church is incorporated in Oregon as Bethany Baptist Church of Portland, Oregon.

120

ARTICLE 2 – PURPOSE

121

Our purpose is to glorify God by coming together for worship, prayer, instruction, and fellowship, based on the Bible. Holy living, training of others, and evangelism are the intended results. *(Acts 2:42; Ephesians 4:11-16).*

122

123

124

ARTICLE 3 – DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

125

By our choice, this church is affiliated with the North American Baptist Conference.

126

ARTICLE 4 – MEMBERSHIP

127

Section 1 – Qualifications

128

All members must:

129

1. Be saved by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

130

2. Be baptized by immersion following a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

131

3. Adhere to the [Core Beliefs](#) and the articles in this constitution. In addition, members who serve in the church as officers, pastors, staff, teachers, and members of the Elections, Constitution and Policy, and Pastor Search Committees are required to adhere and to teach only that which is consistent with the [Doctrinal Statement \(Appendix A\)](#).

132

133

134

135

136

Section 2 – Expectations of a Member

137

1. All members are expected to attend the worship services of Bethany Baptist Church and participate in church business meetings, except for reasonable cause as described in [Active Member Status \(Article 4, Section 4.1\)](#).

138

139

140

2. All members are encouraged to emulate the character of Jesus Christ and mature in their faith by:

141

142

a. Keeping pure in doctrine, faith, and lifestyle.

143

b. Reading and studying the Bible.

144

c. Cultivating a growing and faithful prayer life.

145

d. Participate in opportunities for prayer, Bible study, training, and fellowship within the church.

146

147

e. Demonstrating and sharing their faith through life and words to both believers and unbelievers.

148

- 149 f. Walking with one another in Christian love.
150 g. Readily forgiving others.
151 h. Exercising affectionate care and watchfulness over each other.
152 i. Contribute to the support of the ministries and expenses of this church, the
153 relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.
154 j. Serve in the ministries of the church according to their gifts, abilities, and
155 availability.

156 **Section 3 –The Membership Process**

- 157 1. The Deacon of Congregation Care shall oversee the membership process.
158 2. Due to the varying requirements for membership at other churches, letters of
159 transfer shall not be used in place of the membership process below.
160 3. Anyone desiring to become a member must:
161 a. Indicate their desire to be a member to the Senior Pastor, a member of the
162 Church Council, or the church office staff.
163 b. Fill out the Church Membership Application form which shall include an
164 affirmation of the Core Beliefs and an agreement to adhere to the articles of
165 this constitution.
166 c. Complete an age-appropriate, comprehensive church membership class. All
167 children who become members prior to age 16 are encouraged to complete
168 the adult membership class prior to voting at a church business meeting.
169 d. Give their personal testimony of faith in Jesus Christ in a meeting with at least
170 one (1) elder and one (1) deacon present.
171 e. Be, or have been, baptized publicly by immersion following confession of faith
172 in Jesus Christ.
173 4. Upon completion of the process for becoming a member and recommendation by
174 the Church Council, the candidate(s) shall be presented individually to the church
175 membership for a vote to be received into membership.
176 5. A candidate's membership is effective immediately with the approval of the
177 congregation. The right hand of fellowship shall be extended to each new
178 member at the next Sunday worship service.
179 6. If the new member holds membership in another church, the Senior Pastor or a
180 member of the Church Council shall notify that church in writing of the
181 candidate's new membership status.

182 **Section 4 – Membership Status**

183 The Deacon of Congregation Care shall maintain a current list of the status of each
184 member of the church. This list shall be retained in the church office. Except for

185 death, a vote at a church business meeting is required to initiate or change church
186 membership status.

187 **Section 4.1 – Active Member Status**

- 188 1. Only active members meeting the minimum age requirements and physically
189 present at church business meetings have voting privileges.
- 190 2. A member of the Elder Ministry Team, in cooperation with the Congregation Care
191 Ministry Team, should endeavor to contact active members who have not
192 recently attended worship services, prior to being placed on the Absent Member
193 Care List.
- 194 3. Members who do not attend any worship service at Bethany Baptist Church for at
195 least three (3) consecutive months shall be placed on the Absent Member Care
196 List by the Deacon of Congregation Care, except for reasonable cause including:
 - 197 a. Confinement to home or a care facility.
 - 198 b. Temporary absence as a student.
 - 199 c. Temporary absence because of military service.
 - 200 d. Absence while serving as a Christian missionary.
 - 201 e. Absence due to a temporary job assignment.
 - 202 f. Any cause approved by the Church Council.
- 203 4. Church members are asked to pray for and encourage those members on the
204 Absent Member Care List to return to regular worship.

205 **Section 4.2 – Inactive Member Status**

- 206 1. An active member may have their membership status reclassified to inactive by a
207 vote of the church membership due to absence from worship services or
208 discipline.
- 209 2. Inactive members lose all privileges of church membership.
- 210 3. Any member who remains on the Absent Member Care List for at least six (6)
211 months may have their membership reclassified to inactive.
- 212 4. Any inactive member who became inactive due to being on the Absent Member
213 Care List who resumes attending worship services may make a request for the
214 reclassification of their church membership status to the Senior Pastor, a
215 member of the Church Council, or the church office staff. An inactive member
216 who attends several worship services may be contacted by a member of the
217 Congregation Care Ministry Team and asked if they desire their church
218 membership status to be reclassified to active. Approval for church membership
219 reclassification requires a vote at a church business meeting.
- 220 5. Any member recommended by the Church Council for discipline may have their
221 membership reclassified as inactive.

- 222 6. Any inactive member who became inactive due to being under discipline who
223 demonstrates genuine evidence of repentance over a minimum period of three
224 (3) months, may have their membership status reclassified to active. Approval for
225 church membership reclassification requires a vote at a church business
226 meeting.
- 227 7. If any member remains on the Inactive Member List for eighteen (18) months,
228 their membership has lapsed and their name is dropped from the church
229 membership roll, unless otherwise specified by a vote of the church membership.

230 **Section 5 – Discipline of Members**

231 The purpose of church discipline at Bethany Baptist Church is to glorify God by
232 protecting the testimony of this congregation, by restoring and edifying sinning
233 members, and by maintaining sound doctrine. It may include the confrontational and
234 corrective measures taken by an individual member, the Church Council, and/or the
235 membership regarding certain sins in the life of another member.

236 Church discipline shall be prescribed for conduct contrary to the commands of Scripture
237 which negatively impacts the testimony and unity of this congregation including offenses
238 between members, immoral conduct, factious members causing divisions in this church,
239 and false teaching.

240 All church discipline shall be characterized by the following:

- 241 1. Discipline must be done by those who are spiritually mature (Galatians 6:1).
- 242 2. Discipline must be done in a spirit of humility, gentleness and patience, looking to
243 ourselves lest we too be tempted (Galatians 6:1-2; II Timothy 2:24-25).
- 244 3. Discipline must be done without bias and partiality (I Timothy 5:21).
- 245 4. Discipline must be done in love (Ephesians 4:15).
- 246 5. Discipline must always include a readiness to forgive and restore the member (II
247 Corinthians 2:6-8).
- 248 6. Discipline must be done without procrastination to protect this congregation.
- 249 7. In order to protect the person and the congregation from gossip, rumors and/or
250 slander, discipline must be done without discussion with others until the offending
251 member has been approached privately.
- 252 8. The Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace with one
253 another and to resolve disputes in private or within the church.

254 **Procedure**

- 255 1. Difficulties between members (refer to Matthew 18:15-17 for the principles
256 supporting this process):
 - 257 a. The offended member shall make sure the offense calls for correction
258 according to Scripture and is not merely an opinion or dislike.

- 259 b. The offended member shall bring the matter to the Lord in prayer prior to
260 approaching the offending member.
- 261 c. Upon confirmation from the Lord and His Word, the offended member shall
262 lovingly inform the offending member of their offense in private, seeking
263 reconciliation and restoration.
- 264 d. If the offense is not resolved, then the offended member shall make a second
265 contact with the offending member seeking reconciliation and restoration by
266 taking at least two Council members with him or her to confirm that the
267 accusation is accurate and that the offending member has been appropriately
268 confronted and encouraged to reconcile.
- 269 e. If the offense is still not resolved, then the matter shall be brought before the
270 Church Council.
- 271 f. Upon recommendation of the Church Council, the member's membership
272 may be reclassified to inactive by a vote of the church membership.
- 273 2. Immorality, false teaching, or sin damaging the testimony of this congregation (I
274 Corinthians 5):
- 275 a. A member observing or having accurate knowledge of another member's sin
276 in this regard shall bring the matter to the Lord in prayer prior to approaching
277 the member.
- 278 b. Upon confirmation from the Lord and His Word, the member shall lovingly
279 warn and correct the member in private, seeking repentance and restoration
280 (James 5:19-20).
- 281 c. If the erring member does not heed this warning and correction, then the
282 member shall make a second contact with the sinning member seeking
283 repentance and restoration by taking at least two Council members with him
284 or her to confirm that the accusation is accurate and that the member has
285 been appropriately confronted but refused to repent.
- 286 d. If the erring member still refuses to heed this warning and correction, then it
287 shall be brought to the Church Council.
- 288 e. Upon recommendation of the Church Council, the member's membership
289 may be reclassified to inactive by a vote of the church membership.

290 **Section 6 – Removal of Members**

291 Members shall be removed from the church membership roll:

- 292 1. Upon death.
- 293 2. At the request of the member upon confirmation by the Deacon of Congregation
294 Care.
- 295 3. Due to inactivity ([Article 4, Section 4.2](#)).
- 296 4. By a vote of the church membership for discipline when efforts at restoration
297 have failed ([Article 4, Section 5](#)).

298 **Section 7 – Verification of Membership**

299 Upon request and with the approval of the member, a written verification of membership
300 status shall be provided which may also serve as a letter of transfer.

301 **ARTICLE 5 – ORGANIZATION AND OFFICERS**

302 **Section 1 – Overview**

303 This constitution is congregational in its governance, because all who have placed their
304 faith in Jesus Christ have equal standing before God. Our governance reflects that we
305 individually are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and therefore are all under the authority and
306 leadership of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. Each believer’s loyalty is to God as
307 revealed in His Word. The church membership elects leaders known as the Church
308 Council, which is comprised of elders and deacons, who will lead the congregation by
309 using their God-given gifts. While we depend on the spiritual maturity of our Church
310 Council, we recognize that the Holy Spirit has gifted all believers within the
311 congregation.

312 The church membership delegates and entrusts responsibility for preserving the
313 spiritual integrity and doctrine (elders) as well as day-to-day operations (deacons) within
314 the church to the thirteen (13) members of the Church Council. In general, the deacons
315 will defer to the elders in spiritual and doctrinal matters while the elders will defer to the
316 deacons in administrative and operational matters. While the Church Council has been
317 entrusted with these duties, they are accountable to the church membership and will
318 provide status reports and updates at the quarterly business meetings. These meetings
319 are opportunities for the church membership to ask questions and provide input and
320 affirm the direction of the Church Council. In the rare event that there is a dispute, the
321 church membership can, with prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit, redirect the
322 Church Council.

323 This governance structure allows the Church Council to lead efficiently and in a timely
324 manner. They are able to make decisions on behalf of the church while giving the
325 church membership general oversight responsibility for the direction of the church.

326 A believer’s primary loyalty is to the Bible (Acts 17:11), and their responsibility is to
327 verify that the teaching they receive is Biblical. The elders and deacons are not to say
328 “Do it because I say so”, but rather “Do what I show you from the Bible.”

329 Please refer to the following:

- 330 • [Church Governance Structure \(Figure 1\)](#)
- 331 • [Key Annual Events Timeline \(Figure 2\)](#)
- 332 • [Biblical Principles of Local Church Governance \(Appendix B\)](#)

333 **Section 2 – Church Council**

334 The officers of the church are the thirteen (13) voting positions on the Church Council.

335 **Duties**

336 The Church Council shall:

- 337 1. Consist of thirteen (13) voting positions: the Senior Pastor, four (4) lay elders,
338 and eight (8) deacons, as well as the non-voting positions: Associate Pastor(s),
339 Pastor(s) Emeritus, Clerk, and Interim Pastor.
- 340 2. Have regular meetings with a minimum of ten (10) meetings per year. Please
341 refer to [Business Meetings of the Church Council \(Article 7 Section 4\)](#).
- 342 3. Submit all major matters to the church membership for a vote.
- 343 4. Recommend to the church membership, for their approval, new staff positions
344 that require additional budgeting. When changes are made to staff positions that
345 do not increase the church budget, the change will be reported to the church
346 membership at the next business meeting. Refer to [Compensated Ministry Staff](#)
347 [\(Article 5, Section 5\)](#).
- 348 5. Review and vote on job descriptions.
- 349 6. Vote on all individuals recommended by the deacons for their ministry teams.
- 350 7. Vote on all members recommended by the elders for teaching and leadership
351 positions. Only members reviewed and recommended by the elders may be
352 considered. The Church Council shall determine which positions are teaching
353 and leadership positions. These positions may include but are not limited to:
354 Sunday School teachers, AWANA commander(s) and directors, and small group
355 leaders.
- 356 8. Vote on all curricula recommended by the elders. Only curricula reviewed and
357 recommended by the elders may be considered.
- 358 9. Vote on recommendations from all of the ministry teams for those matters that do
359 not require church membership approval.
- 360 10. Determine who will have signing authority for the church's accounts in addition to
361 the Treasurer. The Financial Secretary shall not be authorized to sign for the
362 church's accounts.
- 363 11. Expend funds per the approved annual budget. The Church Council shall not
364 exceed the approved annual budget without church membership approval. The
365 Church Council may transfer up to one and one-half percent (1.5%) of the total
366 approved annual budget per quarter between unrestricted general ledger
367 accounts without prior church membership approval. All such transactions shall
368 be reported at the next quarterly business meeting.
- 369 12. Review available balance and disbursements from the Benevolent Fund monthly.
- 370 13. Review and vote on changes to policies and procedures.
- 371 14. Maintain all official correspondence, legal documents, and records. They shall
372 oversee compliance to state and local laws pertaining to churches.
- 373 15. Require Church Council members to abstain from voting on matters that have or
374 would have the appearance of a conflict of interest.

- 375 16. Annually select one (1) lay elder to be Chairman of the Church Council.
- 376 17. Annually select one (1) lay elder to be Vice-Chairman of the Church Council.
- 377 18. Satisfy the requirements of the Incorporation Laws of the State of Oregon by
378 naming:
- 379 a. The Chairman (lay elder) of the Church Council to serve as President of the
380 Corporation.
- 381 b. The Vice-Chairman (lay elder) of the Church Council to serve as Secretary of
382 the Corporation.
- 383 c. The Clerk to serve as attorney-in-fact. The attorney-in-fact is the only person
384 authorized to sign contracts on behalf of Bethany Baptist Church, unless an
385 additional individual is temporarily authorized by the Council to serve within
386 the current fiscal year. If the Clerk position is vacant, the Council shall appoint
387 an interim attorney-in-fact.
- 388 19. The Church Council and its officers may be indemnified as provided in the
389 Oregon Revised Statutes, ORS 65.387 to 65.407.
- 390 20. Appoint members of standing committees as required in Committees - Standing
391 (Article 6, Section 1).
- 392 21. Appoint a parliamentarian for each business meeting of the church membership.
- 393 22. Create, oversee and dissolve special, temporary committees as necessary.
- 394 23. Make compensation recommendations for the Senior Pastor to the Stewardship
395 Ministry Team by the end of April for the development of the annual budget.
- 396 24. Appoint a member or members to assume the administrative tasks of the Senior
397 Pastor in an extended absence, including the supervision of the pastoral staff.
- 398 25. Annually appoint the clerk for a one (1) year term, with preference being given to
399 the Office Manager. The clerk may serve an indefinite number of successive
400 terms.

401 **Section 2.1 – Clerk**

402 **Qualifications**

403 The clerk shall have been an active member of this church for the previous year.

404 **Duties**

405 The clerk shall:

- 406 a. Record, post, and archive all minutes of all business meetings of the church
407 membership and all meetings of the Church Council.
- 408 b. Coordinate the preparation of the annual and quarterly reports.
- 409 c. Maintain the current version of the church constitution, and make it available
410 to all church members.
- 411 d. Publish a roster of the following for each quarterly business meeting:
- 412 1) Pastoral and office staff
- 413 2) All elected and appointed officers
- 414 3) All members on each ministry team
- 415 4) All members on standing committees
- 416 e. Perform administrative tasks, as applicable.
- 417 f. Be a non-voting member of the Church Council.

418 **Section 3 – Elder Ministry Team**

419 The Elder Ministry Team shall be composed of the Senior Pastor and four (4) lay elders.
420 If available, the Associate Pastor(s), Pastor(s) Emeritus (at his discretion), and Interim
421 Pastor shall be included in this team.

422 **Qualifications**

423 Each elder shall:

- 424 1. Be a man who meets the Scriptural standards in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9,
425 and 1 Peter 5:1-4.
- 426 2. Be an active member.
- 427 3. Adhere to the articles in this constitution, embrace and only teach that which is
428 consistent with the [Doctrinal Statement \(Appendix A\)](#). The aim of the elders is to
429 lead the congregation into the fullness of this truth.
- 430 4. Not simultaneously occupy the position of deacon.

431 **Duties**

432 The Elder Ministry Team shall:

- 433 1. Devote their time to studying, preaching, and teaching the Bible; prayer;
434 shepherding; encouraging sound doctrine; and guarding against false doctrine
435 (Acts 20:30-31; I Timothy 6:20; II Timothy 1:13, 4:2-5; Titus 1:9,13, 2:1-2).
- 436 2. Annually select their secretary. A quorum shall be sixty percent (60%) of the
437 ministry team members. A majority of votes cast shall decide any question
438 presented. The Chairman of the Church Council shall serve as the chairman of
439 the Elder Ministry Team. The secretary shall keep minutes of their meetings,
440 including names of those present, and distribute them to the ministry team
441 members, and make them available to the Church Council, and any active
442 church member upon request.
- 443 3. In consultation with the Adults and Youth, and Children Ministry Teams, recruit,
444 review and recommend members for teaching and leadership positions to the
445 Church Council for a vote.
- 446 4. Ensure all teachers have appropriate training.
- 447 5. In consultation with the Adults and Youth, and Children Ministry Teams, review
448 and recommend curricula that are consistent with the [Doctrinal Statement](#)
449 [\(Appendix A\)](#) to the Church Council for a vote.
- 450 6. Work with the deacons to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion.
- 451 7. Work with the Deacon of Congregation Care in the distribution of the Benevolent
452 Fund.
- 453 8. Ensure the preaching and teaching responsibilities of the Senior Pastor, including
454 pulpit supply, are covered in the event of his absence.
- 455 9. Administer the church budget allocated for their ministry team.
- 456 10. Bring recommendations from the elder ministry team to the Church Council.
- 457 11. Create, oversee and dissolve special, temporary committees (such as elders-in-
458 training) as necessary.
- 459 12. Develop and propose their ministry team's budget for the next fiscal year to the
460 Stewardship Ministry Team prior to the end of April.

461 **Section 3.1 – Senior Pastor**

462 He shall:

- 463 1. Meet the qualifications and perform the duties of an elder stated above.
- 464 2. Be a preacher of the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Bible.
- 465 3. Have completed seminary training in Hebrew, Greek, and expository preaching,
466 embrace and only teach that which is consistent with the [Doctrinal Statement](#)
467 [\(Appendix A\)](#).
- 468 4. Be ordained in accordance with ordination as referenced in [Appendix C](#), or if not
469 ordained in such a manner become ordained during his ministry here.

- 470 5. Be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time
471 ministry of preaching and teaching of the Word.
- 472 6. Preach and oversee the ordinances of baptism and communion and other duties
473 that usually pertain to this office (II Timothy 4:1-5).
- 474 7. Teach the church membership and baptism classes or recommend a qualified
475 teacher to the Church Council for a vote.
- 476 8. Be a voting member of the Elder Ministry Team.
- 477 9. Be a voting member of the Church Council.
- 478 10. Supervise pastoral staff, unless otherwise specified by the Church Council in the
479 staff person's job description.
- 480 11. Make annual compensation recommendations for pastoral staff he supervises to
481 the Stewardship Ministry Team by the end of April for the development of the
482 annual budget.
- 483 12. Have the option of being a non-voting member of any deacon-led ministry teams
484 and any special, temporary committees.
- 485 13. Be accountable to the Church Council and ultimately to the church membership.

486 **Section 3.2 – Associate Pastor(s)**

487 Each associate pastor shall:

- 488 1. Meet the qualifications and perform the duties of an elder stated above.
- 489 2. Be a preacher of the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Bible.
- 490 3. Embrace and only teach that which is consistent with the [Doctrinal Statement](#)
491 [\(Appendix A\)](#).
- 492 4. Be ordained in accordance with ordination as referenced in [Appendix C](#), or if not
493 ordained in such a manner become ordained during his ministry here.
- 494 5. Be a voting member of the Elder Ministry Team.
- 495 6. Be a non-voting member of the Church Council.
- 496 7. Serve on ministry team(s) as directed by the Church Council.
- 497 8. Be accountable to the Senior Pastor, penultimately to the Church Council and
498 ultimately to the church membership.

499 **Section 3.3 – Pastor(s) Emeritus**

500 If a retired pastor is a member of Bethany Baptist Church, the Church Council may
501 recommend to the church membership that he be bestowed the honorary title of Pastor
502 Emeritus.

503 He shall:

- 504 1. Meet the qualifications of an elder stated above.

- 505 2. Be a preacher of the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Bible.
- 506 3. Be an ordained pastor (as referenced in [Appendix C](#)), embrace and only teach
507 that which is consistent with the [Doctrinal Statement \(Appendix A\)](#).
- 508 4. Have been retired from professional ministry for at least three (3) years, and is at
509 least 65 years old.
- 510 5. Be privileged to participate at his discretion for an indefinite period of time in the
511 Elder Ministry Team and the Church Council as a non-voting member. This
512 privilege may be terminated by a vote of the church membership upon the
513 recommendation of the Church Council.

514 **Section 3.4 – Interim Pastor**

515 At such a time that the church is without a Senior Pastor, the Church Council may
516 recommend to the Church the securing of an interim pastor by following the procedure
517 for [Elections - Calling of a Pastor \(Article 8, Section 1\)](#). He shall serve for a defined
518 period of six (6) months, or less if a Senior Pastor assumes his ministry. Each
519 subsequent six (6) month period shall require a vote of the membership with an
520 affirmative vote by written ballot of eighty percent (80%) of the votes cast.

521 He shall:

- 522 1. Meet the qualifications of an elder stated above.
- 523 2. Be a preacher of the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Bible.
- 524 3. Be an ordained pastor (as referenced in [Appendix C](#)).
- 525 4. Preach and administer the ordinances of baptism and communion.
- 526 5. Be a non-voting member of the Elder Ministry Team.
- 527 6. Be a non-voting member of the Church Council.
- 528 7. Not be required to become a member of this church. He shall, however, adhere
529 to the articles in this constitution, embrace and only teach that which is consistent
530 with the [Doctrinal Statement \(Appendix A\)](#).
- 531 8. Have the option of being a non-voting member of all deacon-led ministry teams
532 and any special, temporary committees.
- 533 9. Be accountable to the Church Council and ultimately to the church membership.

534 **Section 3.5 – Lay Elders**

535 Each lay elder shall:

- 536 1. Meet the qualifications and perform the duties of an elder stated above.
- 537 2. Be an active member of this church for the previous three (3) years.
- 538 3. Be a voting member of the Elder Ministry Team.
- 539 4. Be a voting member of the Church Council.

- 540 5. Not be remunerated for this ministry, except for pulpit supply.
- 541 6. Not simultaneously occupy the position of deacon.
- 542 7. Be eligible to serve no more than six (6) consecutive one-year terms or any
- 543 portion(s) thereof on the Church Council and then be required to take a minimum
- 544 of one (1) full year off prior to serving again on the Church Council.

545 **Section 4 – Deacon Ministry Teams**

546 The deacons shall be either men or women who lead the eight (8) ministry teams:
547 Adults and Youth, Children, Congregation Care, Facilities, Missions, Outreach,
548 Stewardship, and Worship. The word “deacon” shall refer to either deacons (men) or
549 deaconesses (women).

550 **Qualifications**

551 Each deacon shall:

- 552 1. Meet the Scriptural standards in I Timothy 3:8-13.
- 553 2. Possess gifts of service, and give of themselves in service to the church for their
554 particular ministry position.
- 555 3. Affirm the [Core Beliefs](#), adhere to the articles in this constitution, embrace and
556 only teach that which is consistent with the [Doctrinal Statement \(Appendix A\)](#).
- 557 4. Be an active member of this church for the previous three (3) years.
- 558 5. Have served in a ministry in this church for at least two (2) years.
- 559 6. Not be remunerated for this ministry.
- 560 7. Not simultaneously occupy the position of elder.

561 **Duties**

562 Each deacon shall:

- 563 1. Annually appoint a ministry team of at least three (3) active members of the
564 church to serve with them in making decisions to fulfill the responsibilities of their
565 designated ministry.
 - 566 a. Believers who are not church members desiring to serve on ministry teams
567 may serve only by a recommendation of the deacon of that ministry team and
568 with an affirmative vote of the Church Council.
 - 569 b. At the recommendation of the deacon and with the approval of the Church
570 Council, non-believers may assist ministry team members but cannot be a
571 member of that ministry team.
- 572 2. Work with the Elder Ministry Team as demonstrated in Acts 6:1-7.
- 573 3. Serve as chairman of their ministry team and appoint a secretary. A quorum shall
574 be at least three (3) members of the ministry team. A majority of votes cast shall
575 decide any question presented. The secretary shall keep minutes of their
576 meetings, including names of those present, distribute them to the ministry team
577 members, and make them available to the Church Council and any active church
578 member upon request.
- 579 4. Submit names of prospective members for their ministry team to the Church
580 Council for a vote.
- 581 5. Administer the church budget allocated for their ministry team.

- 582 6. Bring recommendations from their ministry team to the Church Council.
- 583 7. Quarterly update a roster of their ministry team and provide this to the Clerk.
- 584 8. Develop and propose their ministry team's annual budget for the next fiscal year
585 to the Stewardship Ministry Team by the end of April with the assistance of their
586 ministry team in a ministry team meeting.
- 587 9. Individually, as applicable, supervise non-pastoral, compensated ministry staff,
588 unless otherwise specified by the Church Council in the staff person's job
589 description.
- 590 10. Make annual compensation recommendations for non-pastoral, compensated
591 ministry staff he/she supervises to the Stewardship Ministry Team by the end of
592 April for the development of the annual budget.
- 593 11. Be eligible to serve no more than six (6) consecutive one-year terms or any
594 portion(s) thereof on the Church Council and then be required to take a minimum
595 of one (1) full year off prior to serving again on the Church Council.

596 **Section 4.1 – Adults and Youth Ministry Team**

597 **Duties**

598 The Deacon of Adults and Youth Ministry and this ministry team shall:

- 599 1. Minister to adults and youth within the congregation, sixth grade through adult.
- 600 2. Assist the elders in recruiting and training all teachers and leaders for adults and
601 youth.
- 602 3. Assist the elders in the selection of curricula for adults and youth.
- 603 4. Coordinate the ministries to adults and youth.
- 604 5. Create, oversee, and dissolve any special, temporary committees as needed
605 (such as retreats, seminars, outreach events, summer programs, camps, or
606 holiday programs).

607 **Section 4.2 – Children Ministry Team**

608 **Duties**

609 The Deacon of Children Ministry and this ministry team shall:

- 610 1. Minister to children within the congregation, birth through fifth grade.
- 611 2. Assist the elders in recruiting and training all teachers and leaders for children.
- 612 3. Assist the elders in the selection of curricula for children.
- 613 4. Coordinate the ministries to children.
- 614 5. Create, oversee, and dissolve any special, temporary committees as needed
615 (such as summer programs, camps or holiday programs).

616 **Section 4.3 – Congregation Care Ministry Team**

617 The term “congregation” refers to members and attendees of Bethany Baptist Church.

618 **Duties**

619 The Deacon of Congregation Care shall serve as Benevolent Fund Treasurer, and
620 oversee the distribution of the Benevolent Fund in consultation with the Elder Ministry
621 Team. The Deacon shall ensure a monthly report is submitted to the Church Council of
622 amounts disbursed and remaining available balance.

623 The Deacon of Congregation Care Ministry and this ministry team shall:

- 624 1. Recruit, train, and coordinate men and women to minister to this congregation.
625 Romans 12:1-21
- 626 2. Coordinate the welcoming of new members into the church.
- 627 3. Appoint a head greeter to coordinate greeters to welcome the congregation to
628 the worship service(s).
- 629 4. Appoint a head usher.
- 630 5. Appoint a church historian and a church librarian.
- 631 6. Maintain the current list of each member’s status as described in [Membership](#)
632 [\(Article 4\)](#) and provide this list to the Clerk prior to all business meetings of the
633 church membership.
- 634 7. Present proposed changes in church membership status to the Church Council
635 for recommendation to the church membership for a vote.
- 636 8. Follow up on all requests for and oversee the process for baptism and
637 membership as described in [Membership – Procedure for Being Baptized and](#)
638 [Becoming a Member \(Article 4, Section 3\)](#).
- 639 9. Assist the elders with the preparations for communion and for baptisms.
- 640 10. Create, oversee, and dissolve any special, temporary committees as needed
641 (such as hostess, usher team, greeter team, or connection center).

642 **Section 4.4 – Facilities Ministry Team**

643 **Duties**

644 The Deacon of Facilities Ministry and this ministry team shall:

- 645 1. Recruit, train, and coordinate men and/or women to serve in the Facilities
646 Ministry.
- 647 2. Make any decisions in accordance with the policies and procedures regarding
648 requests of a personal nature by active members to use church-owned facilities,
649 grounds, vehicles, or equipment. Refer to [All Other Groups and Meetings \(Article
650 7, Section 5\)](#).
- 651 3. Supervise the protection and maintenance of church-owned buildings, grounds,
652 vehicles, and equipment.
- 653 4. Create, oversee, and dissolve any special, temporary committees as needed
654 (such as special projects, landscaping, interior design, or decorating).

655 **Section 4.5 – Missions Ministry Team**

656 **Duties**

657 The Deacon of Missions Ministry and this ministry team shall:

- 658 1. Lead our church congregation to send and/or support missionaries called to the
659 field.
- 660 2. Recruit, train, and coordinate men and/or women to serve in the Missions
661 Ministry.
- 662 3. Promote sponsored missionaries and other ministries supported in the church
663 budget.
- 664 4. Serve as the point-of-contact for sponsored missionaries and other ministries
665 supported by this church, as well as those under consideration for support.
- 666 5. Promote short-term mission opportunities.
- 667 6. Annually evaluate and propose support levels for missionaries and other
668 approved ministries outside the local congregation.
- 669 7. Create, oversee, and dissolve any special, temporary committees as needed
670 (such as short-term mission teams, or missions conferences).

671 **Section 4.6 – Outreach Ministry Team**

672 **Duties**

673 The Deacon of Outreach Ministry and this ministry team shall:

- 674 1. Promote opportunities for our church congregation to personally engage in
675 sharing the Gospel with the local community.

- 676 2. Recruit, train, and coordinate our church congregation to serve on the Outreach
677 Ministry Team.
- 678 3. Coordinate sponsored evangelism and outreach events.
- 679 4. Serve as the point-of-contact for all evangelism and local outreach events.
- 680 5. Create, oversee, and dissolve any special, temporary committees as needed for
681 specific events.

682 **Section 4.7 – Stewardship Ministry Team**

683 **Duties**

684 The Deacon of Stewardship shall recommend to the Church Council for a vote, one (1)
685 member to serve as Treasurer and one (1) member to serve as Financial Secretary for
686 a one (1) year term. Both may serve an indefinite number of successive terms.

687 The Deacon of Stewardship Ministry and this ministry team shall:

- 688 1. Recruit, train, and coordinate men and/or women, in addition to the Treasurer
689 and Financial Secretary, to serve in the Stewardship Ministry and to oversee the
690 proper handling of this church’s finances.
- 691 2. Include the Treasurer and Financial Secretary as part of this ministry team.
- 692 3. Propose any changes in banking to the Church Council for a vote.
- 693 4. Appoint people to serve as counters of all monies. A minimum of three (3) active
694 members shall be present to count and prepare deposits of all monies.
- 695 5. Maintain current compensation tables for all compensated staff for use in annual
696 reviews.
- 697 6. Direct the development of the annual church budget, and bring a proposal to the
698 Church Council for their vote. Upon approval, the Church Council shall
699 recommend it to the church membership at the Annual Meeting.
- 700 7. Create, oversee, and dissolve any special, temporary committees as needed
701 (such as offering counters, or stewardship education).
- 702 8. Verify that the church maintains its state corporation qualifications.

703 **Section 4.7.1 – Financial Secretary**

704 **Qualifications**

705 The financial secretary shall:

- 706 1. Be an active member.
- 707 2. Have been a member of the church for at least two (2) years.

708 **Duties**

709 The financial secretary shall:

- 710 1. Maintain confidential and accurate records of all contributions to the Church.

- 711 2. Provide each donor with an annual statement of their contributions by January 31
712 for tax purposes.
- 713 3. Not be authorized to sign checks.
- 714 4. Work in cooperation with the Treasurer and the Stewardship Ministry Team.
- 715 5. Provide information to the Auditing Committee upon request.
- 716 6. Not concurrently hold the position of treasurer, deacon, or elder.

717 **Section 4.7.2 – Treasurer**

718 **Qualifications**

719 The treasurer shall:

- 720 1. Be an active member.
- 721 2. Have been a member of the church for at least two (2) years.
- 722 3. Be familiar with tax laws and tax preparation as they pertain to a 501(c)(3) non-
723 profit organization.

724 **Duties**

725 The treasurer shall:

- 726 1. Verify that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such
727 banks, financial institutions, or depositories as are appropriate.
- 728 2. Present financial reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the
729 church at each quarterly business meeting, and whenever required by the
730 Church Council.
- 731 3. Be responsible for distributing payroll, maintaining employee tax records, and
732 preparing W-2 forms and distributing them by January 31st.
- 733 4. File all tax forms necessary to ensure the retention of the church's tax-exempt
734 status with the state and federal governments.
- 735 5. Have the authority to sign for the church's accounts.
- 736 6. Work in cooperation with the Financial Secretary and the Stewardship Ministry
737 Team.
- 738 7. Provide information to the Auditing Committee upon request.
- 739 8. Not concurrently hold the position of financial secretary, deacon, or elder.

740 **Section 4.8 – Worship Ministry Team**

741 **Duties**

742 The Deacon of Worship Ministry and this ministry team shall:

- 743 1. Recruit, train, and coordinate men and/or women to serve in the Worship Ministry
744 (such as prayer, music, or audio/visual).

- 745 2. Assist the elders with the preparations for worship.
746 3. Create, oversee, and dissolve any special, temporary committees as needed
747 (such as special music, or audio/visual).

748 **Section 5 – Non-Pastoral Compensated Ministry Staff**

749 **Qualifications**

750 The non-pastoral, compensated ministry staff (such as Director of Children Ministry,
751 Director of Youth Ministry, intern, office manager, secretary or campus manager) shall:

- 752 1. Meet the same Scriptural standards for deacons and deaconesses in 1 Timothy
753 3:8-13.
- 754 2. Be an active member.
- 755 3. Dedicate themselves to serve the church in their particular ministry.
- 756 4. Affirm the [Core Beliefs](#), adhere to the articles in this constitution, embrace and
757 only teach that which is consistent with the [Doctrinal Statement \(Appendix A\)](#).
- 758 5. Not occupy the position of elder or deacon.

759 **Accountability**

760 The accountability of all non-pastoral staff shall be specified in their job description.

761 **Hiring**

762 The Church Council shall evaluate the need for additional compensated staff positions.

763 The Constitution and Policy Committee shall prepare a job description and recommend
764 it to the Church Council for their vote.

765 The Stewardship Ministry Team shall recommend a compensation package for this
766 position to the Church Council for a vote by the church membership.

767 The Church Council shall recommend new staff positions to the church membership for
768 their vote.

769 The Church Council shall oversee the hiring process to fill the non-pastoral staff
770 positions.

771 **Resignation**

772 Non-pastoral staff may resign their position by submitting a letter to the Church Council.
773 Resignations shall be effective upon receipt of the letter or the date specified in the
774 letter.

775 **Dismissal**

776 Non-pastoral staff who fail to fulfill their duties, or fail to maintain the qualifications for
777 their position, may be dismissed from their office by a vote of the Church Council at any
778 business meeting of the Church Council.

779

ARTICLE 6 – COMMITTEES

780 The term “members-at-large” refers to active church members not currently serving on
781 the Church Council.

782 Section 1 – Standing Committees

783 There are three (3) standing, permanent committees: Elections, Auditing, and
784 Constitution and Policy. With the exception of the three (3) members-at-large on the
785 Elections Committee, the Church Council appoints members to these committees.

786 Section 1.1 – Elections Committee

787 The Elections Committee shall:

- 788 1. Be composed of the Senior Pastor, one (1) lay elder appointed by the Church
789 Council, one (1) deacon appointed by the Church Council, and three (3)
790 members-at-large elected by a majority vote at the Annual Business Meeting.
- 791 2. Have the Chairman of the Church Council act as the temporary chairman to
792 initiate the first meeting for the selection of the chairman and secretary.
- 793 3. Have three (3) members-at-large each of whom serves a non-consecutive, one
794 (1) year term and have been an active member of this church for the previous
795 year.
- 796 4. All members of this committee shall affirm the [Core Beliefs](#), adhere to the articles
797 in this constitution, and embrace the [Doctrinal Statement \(Appendix A\)](#).
- 798 5. Follow the procedure listed below for [Elections - Selection of Officers \(Article 8,
799 Section 3\)](#).
- 800 6. Meet in closed session. Invited guests shall be present only to provide pertinent
801 testimony or consultation. Invited guests may not be present during committee
802 deliberations.
- 803 7. Require two-thirds of the committee members to constitute a quorum with a
804 majority of votes cast deciding any question presented.
- 805 8. Record and maintain accurate minutes and make them available to the Church
806 Council.
- 807 9. Be accountable to the church membership.

808 Section 1.2 – Auditing Committee

809 The Auditing Committee shall:

- 810 1. Be composed of three (3) members appointed by the Church Council.
811 Additionally, if necessary, the services of an outside resource may be used with
812 expenditures not to exceed the amount budgeted in the approved annual budget

- 813 for that purpose. Compensated staff and Stewardship Ministry Team members
814 are not permitted to serve on the Auditing Committee.
- 815 2. Have the Chairman of the Church Council act as the temporary chairman to
816 initiate the first meeting for the selection of the chairman and secretary.
- 817 3. Serve a two (2) year term. Each member may serve an indefinite number of
818 successive terms.
- 819 4. Meet in closed session with others attending only by special invitation of the
820 committee. Invited guests shall be present only to provide pertinent testimony or
821 consultation. Invited guests may not be present during committee deliberations.
- 822 5. Require two-thirds of the committee members to constitute a quorum with a
823 majority of votes cast deciding any question presented.
- 824 6. Review the:
- 825 a. Adequacy of internal controls; for example, review the financial policies and
826 procedures.
- 827 b. Accuracy of financial records and reports of the previous fiscal years since
828 the last audit.
- 829 c. Corporation's tax-exempt status and identify and report activities that could
830 jeopardize it.
- 831 7. Produce a report presenting the findings of their review to the church
832 membership no later than the October quarterly business meeting of the second
833 year of their term.
- 834 a. If unable to produce a report within this timeframe, the Council shall report
835 this to the church membership at that same meeting.
- 836 8. Be accountable to the Church Council and ultimately to the church membership.

837 **Section 1.3 – Constitution and Policy Committee**

838 The Constitution and Policy Committee shall:

- 839 1. Be composed of the Senior Pastor, one (1) lay elder, one (1) deacon, and four
840 (4) members-at-large, all appointed by the Church Council.
- 841 2. Have the Chairman of the Church Council act as the temporary chairman to
842 initiate the first meeting for the selection of the chairman and secretary.
- 843 3. Be eligible to serve no more than six (6) consecutive one-year terms or any
844 portion(s) thereof on the committee and then be required to take a minimum of
845 one (1) full year off prior to serving again on the committee (except the Senior
846 Pastor).
- 847 4. Affirm the [Core Beliefs](#), adhere to the articles in this constitution, embrace and
848 only teach that which is consistent with the [Doctrinal Statement \(Appendix A\)](#).
- 849 5. Meet only in open session.

- 850 6. Require two-thirds of the committee members to constitute a quorum with a
851 majority of votes cast deciding any question presented.
- 852 7. Be responsible for:
- 853 a. Reviewing and proposing any amendment(s) to this constitution to the Church
854 Council for a vote by the church membership as found in [Amendments](#)
855 [\(Article 9\)](#).
- 856 b. Considering and acting upon suggestions from the church membership and
857 ministry teams on constitutional and policy matters.
- 858 c. Working with the ministry teams to develop, review, and propose necessary
859 changes to their policies and procedures to the Church Council for their vote.
- 860 d. Working with the ministry teams to develop, review, and propose necessary
861 changes to job descriptions to the Church Council for their vote.
- 862 e. Providing consultation on all constitutional matters.
- 863 8. Present a report of all constitution, policy and procedures recommendations
864 given to the Church Council at each quarterly business meeting.
- 865 9. Record and maintain accurate minutes and make them available to the Church
866 Council.
- 867 10. Be accountable to the Church Council and ultimately to the church membership.

868 **Section 2 – Resignation or Dismissal of Auditing or Constitution and Policy**
869 **Committee Members**

870 *(Resignation or dismissal of any Elections Committee member is covered in [Article 8 –](#)*
871 *[Elections, Section 6 – Resignation and Dismissal of Elections Committee Members.](#))*

872 **Resignation**

873 Any Auditing or Constitution and Policy Committee member may resign by submitting a
874 letter to the Church Council. Resignations shall be effective upon receipt of the letter or
875 the date specified in the letter.

876 **Dismissal**

877 Any Auditing or Constitution and Policy Committee member who fails to fulfill their
878 committee duties or fails to maintain the qualifications for their position may be
879 dismissed from the committee by a vote of the Church Council.

880 **Section 3 – Vacancies for Auditing or Constitution and Policy Committee**
881 **Members**

882 *(Vacancies for Elections Committee member positions are covered in [Article 8 –](#)*
883 *[Elections, Section 7 – Vacancies for Elections Committee Members.](#))*

884 Any vacancy may be filled by a member appointed by the Church Council.

885 **Section 4 – Temporary Committees**

886 Both the Church Council and the individual ministry teams have the authority to create,
887 oversee, and dissolve any temporary committee to which it delegates any specific
888 aspect of its responsibility. Where appropriate, temporary committees should determine
889 what constitutes their quorum, and how their decisions are made.

890 The church membership may create and dissolve a temporary committee at any
891 business meeting for any purpose deemed necessary.

892 The temporary committee for calling a pastor is described under [Elections - Calling of a](#)
893 [Pastor \(Article 8, Section 1\)](#).

894 **ARTICLE 7 – MEETINGS**

895 Biblical principles, followed by the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall
896 determine any question of procedure not addressed in this constitution.

897 Please refer to the following when reading this article:

- 898 • [Key Annual Events Timeline \(Figure 2\)](#)

899 **Section 1 – Fiscal Year**

900 The fiscal year begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th. Except as otherwise provided,
901 all terms of office coincide with the fiscal year.

902 **Section 2 – Worship Meetings**

903 The congregation:

- 904 1. Meets each Sunday for worship, instruction from the Bible, and fellowship.
905 2. Observes the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of the month or at other such
906 times as the Church Council may decide.
907 3. Meets during the week for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship.

908 **Section 3 – Business Meetings of the Church Membership**

- 909 1. The Chairman of the Church Council, the Vice-Chairman or the Chairman's
910 designee from the Church Council, shall preside at all business meetings unless
911 otherwise specified, such as in [Petition-Called Business Meetings \(Article 7,](#)
912 [Section 3.4\)](#).
913 2. Active members, who are physically present and at least 16 years of age, are
914 eligible to vote in church business meetings, except for the purchase, sale, lease,
915 or mortgaging of property, which only shall be voted on by active members who
916 are at least 18 years of age.

- 917 3. For the purpose of determining the quorum, the Clerk (Article 5, Section 4.3)
918 shall provide the current list of active voting members to the individual presiding
919 over the business meeting.
- 920 4. Twenty percent (20%) of the members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum
921 at any business meeting unless otherwise specified, such as Purchase, Lease or
922 Sale (Article 12, Section 1).
- 923 5. A majority of votes cast shall decide any question presented unless otherwise
924 specified.
- 925 6. If a vote by paper ballot is required, the Chairman shall appoint a lead teller plus
926 two (2) or more additional tellers. Their names shall be recorded in the business
927 meeting minutes. The tellers shall distribute and collect the ballots, and tabulate
928 the votes. The lead teller shall report the tabulation of the total votes cast to the
929 Chairman including the number of affirmative and negative votes cast. The
930 Chairman shall announce the tabulation to the church membership. The tellers
931 shall place the ballots that have been cast into an envelope, seal, sign and date
932 it, and clearly mark the contents on the outside of the envelope. Immediately
933 following the meeting, the lead teller shall place the envelope in the church office
934 safe, where it shall be kept for a minimum of six (6) months. In the event the vote
935 tally is challenged, the votes shall be recounted within ten (10) days following the
936 challenge. The Chairman shall appoint three (3) members from the Church
937 Council for the recount with the person challenging the count as an observer.
- 938 7. Requests for new business should be provided in writing to the Chairman at least
939 one (1) week before the meeting. Exceptions are at the discretion of the
940 Chairman.
- 941 8. Unapproved minutes of the preceding meeting shall be posted conspicuously
942 within ten (10) days and be made available to church members upon request.
- 943 9. Approval of these minutes shall be addressed at the next quarterly business
944 meeting. Approved minutes shall be posted conspicuously within ten (10) days
945 and be made available to church members upon request.

946 **Section 3.1 – Annual Business Meeting**

- 947 1. The annual business meeting shall be held in June. Copies of the following items
948 shall be made available one (1) week in advance:
- 949 a. Meeting agenda with a proposed date for next quarterly business meeting
- 950 b. Any outstanding unapproved minutes
- 951 c. Church Council's reports and recommendations
- 952 d. Annual ministry teams' reports
- 953 e. Annual committees' reports, except the Auditing Committee, which reports at
954 the October quarterly business meeting.
- 955 f. Summary of changes in membership status since the previous annual
956 meeting

- 957 g. Current lists of both active and inactive members
- 958 h. Current Absent Member Care List
- 959 i. Annual church financial update
- 960 j. Proposed church budget for next fiscal year
- 961 2. The church membership shall elect, by paper ballot, four (4) lay elders and eight
- 962 (8) deacons for the Church Council, and three (3) members-at-large for the
- 963 Elections Committee.

964 **Section 3.2 – Quarterly Business Meetings**

- 965 1. Quarterly business meetings shall be held in October, January, and April. Copies
- 966 of the following items shall be made available one (1) week in advance:
 - 967 a. Meeting agenda with a proposed date for next quarterly business meeting
 - 968 b. Any outstanding unapproved minutes
 - 969 c. Church Council’s reports and recommendations
 - 970 d. Ministry teams’ reports
 - 971 e. Committees’ reports
 - 972 f. Current Absent Member Care List
 - 973 g. Changes in membership status since the last quarterly business meeting
 - 974 h. Church financial update
- 975 2. If the date of the next quarterly business meeting must be rescheduled, the
- 976 Church Council will determine an alternate date and announce the same to the
- 977 congregation at least one (1) week before the new date of the meeting.

978 **Section 3.3 – Special Business Meetings**

979 Special business meetings may be called by a majority vote of the Church Council.
980 The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced to the
981 congregation during the Sunday worship service at least one (1) week in advance of
982 the date of the meeting.

983 **Section 3.4 – Petition-Called Business Meetings**

- 984 1. A business meeting may be called by petition and shall be held provided that ten
- 985 percent (10%) of the members eligible to vote have signed the petition.
- 986 2. Prior to calling the meeting, the petitioner along with either a church office staff
- 987 member or a member of the Church Council, shall certify whether the petition has
- 988 the required number of valid signatures.
- 989 3. The date, time, and purpose of a petition-called business meeting shall be
- 990 announced publicly during the Sunday worship service at least one (1) week in
- 991 advance of the date of the meeting.

992 4. The petitioner shall open the meeting, and call for the election of a temporary
993 chairman to preside for the duration of this meeting. A plurality vote shall
994 determine the temporary chairman from the nominations taken from the floor.

995 **Section 4 –Business Meetings of the Church Council**

- 996 1. The Senior Pastor shall open the first Council meeting of the fiscal year and
997 accept nomination(s) for Chairman of the Church Council for a vote by the
998 Church Council. If there is no Senior Pastor, then the Elder Ministry Team shall
999 choose an elder to open the first Council meeting.
- 1000 2. The Chairman of the Church Council, the Vice-Chairman or the Chairman's
1001 designee from the Church Council, shall preside at all Church Council meetings.
- 1002 3. Seven (7) concurring votes shall decide any question presented. The minutes for
1003 these meetings shall include a tally of affirmative and negative votes cast, as well
1004 as abstentions, for each question or decision. The clerk shall keep minutes of the
1005 Church Council meetings, including names of those present, and distribute them
1006 to the Church Council and to any active church member upon request.
- 1007 4. Notice of the time and place of each regular Church Council meeting shall be
1008 announced in the church bulletin the Sunday prior to the meeting indicating the
1009 date, time, location and whether the meeting will be an open or executive
1010 session.
- 1011 5. The Chairman or Senior Pastor may call additional business meetings of the
1012 Church Council at any time. Notice and purpose of these business meetings shall
1013 be announced in the church bulletin the week prior or reported in the church
1014 bulletin within two (2) weeks following the meeting.
- 1015 6. Other than executive sessions, Church Council meetings shall be open to
1016 attendance by any member of the church. Non-members may attend open
1017 session Church Council meetings only with the approval of the Chairman.
- 1018 7. An executive session may be invoked only by a majority vote of the Church
1019 Council and only for discussions regarding salary recommendations, issues of a
1020 personal or sensitive nature, discipline issues, potential litigation, contract
1021 negotiations and disbursement of benevolent funds. Executive sessions are open
1022 only to Church Council members. Guests may attend only upon approval by a
1023 majority vote of the Church Council. Church Council members may not be
1024 excluded intentionally except during salary discussions which directly involve
1025 them or the Church Council member's immediate family.
- 1026 8. Executive session minutes shall note, at a minimum, the topic, duration of the
1027 session, and names of those present.
- 1028 9. Minutes of both open and executive sessions shall be posted conspicuously
1029 within ten (10) days of the meeting and shall be archived on church property.

1030 **Section 5 – All Other Groups and Meetings**

1031 All requests for the use of the church facilities by organizations and groups not officially
1032 affiliated with this church require a vote by the Church Council, unless specifically
1033 delegated by the Church Council through written policy.

1034 **Section 6 – Unusual Circumstances, Electronic or Alternate Format Meetings, and**
1035 **Quorum Reductions**

- 1036 1. Typically, business meetings of the church membership, Church Council, and all
1037 committees (except ministry teams) described in this constitution require all its
1038 participating members to be in-person (face-to-face) in one room or area to make
1039 decisions. However, this is not always possible.
- 1040 2. If unusual circumstances exist there may be the need for the church council,
1041 church membership, and/or committees (except ministry teams) to transact
1042 business using electronic meetings or an alternate format.
- 1043 a. The authorization for groups to meet to conduct business in an electronic or
1044 alternate format due to unusual circumstances shall be determined by seven
1045 (7) concurring votes of the Church Council either in-person (face-to-face),
1046 electronically, email, or in an alternate format.
- 1047 b. Rather than all participating members of that group meeting in-person (face-
1048 to-face) in one area, some or all members of that group may communicate
1049 with other members electronically or in an alternate format.
- 1050 c. To ensure that such electronic or alternate format meetings do not lose their
1051 character as a deliberative assembly, these meetings shall provide conditions
1052 of opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all participating
1053 members of that group as described in Chapter 1 of Robert’s Rules, which
1054 states, “The group meets in a single room or area or under equivalent
1055 conditions of opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all
1056 participants.”
- 1057 d. Every effort shall be made to ensure that meetings are conducted as closely
1058 as possible to the standard operating procedures for that group as listed in
1059 this constitution.
- 1060 3. Due to its lack of deliberate assembly, electronic mail (email) is not permitted as
1061 an alternate format for business, Church Council, and committee (except ministry
1062 teams) meetings, except when the Church Council needs to authorize electronic
1063 or alternate format meetings due to unusual circumstances.
- 1064 4. If executive meetings of the Church Council or closed committee (except ministry
1065 teams) meetings are conducted electronically or in an alternate format, each
1066 member of that group shall ensure that only they have access to the audio and/or
1067 video for that meeting.
- 1068 5. All meetings that are conducted electronically or in an alternate format shall be
1069 indicated in the minutes.

- 1070 6. All meetings shall return to standard operating procedure as soon as possible.
- 1071 7. If it is impossible to assemble a quorum for the Church Council due to
- 1072 catastrophic circumstances, the quorum may be reduced to 50% of able, residual
- 1073 members. All quorum requirements shall return to their normal requirements as
- 1074 described in this constitution as soon as possible.

1075 **ARTICLE 8 – ELECTIONS**

1076 **Section 1 – Process for Calling a Pastor**

- 1077 1. The Church Council shall call at least one (1) congregational prayer meeting to
- 1078 seek God’s leading.
- 1079 2. At a special or the next quarterly business meeting, the church membership shall
- 1080 consider whether to initiate a Pastor Search committee.
- 1081 3. Preparation of Job Description and Compensation Package
- 1082 a. The Constitution and Policy Committee shall recommend a job description for
- 1083 this position to the Church Council. The Church Council shall recommend an
- 1084 approved job description for a vote by the church membership.
- 1085 b. The Stewardship Ministry Team shall recommend a compensation package
- 1086 for this position to the Church Council. The Church Council shall recommend
- 1087 an approved compensation package for a vote by the church membership.
- 1088 4. Composition of the Pastor Search Committee
- 1089 a. The committee to search for the Senior Pastor or an Interim Pastor shall be
- 1090 composed of seven (7) members; six (6) members (which may be members
- 1091 of the Church Council or members-at-large) elected by the church
- 1092 membership, and one (1) lay elder appointed by the Church Council.
- 1093 b. The committee to search for an associate pastor shall be composed of seven
- 1094 (7) members; five (5) members (which may be members of the Church
- 1095 Council or members-at-large) elected by the church membership, the Senior
- 1096 Pastor, and one (1) lay elder appointed by the Church Council.
- 1097 c. All members of this committee(s) shall affirm the [Core Beliefs](#), adhere to the
- 1098 articles in this constitution, and embrace the [Doctrinal Statement \(Appendix](#)
- 1099 [A\)](#).
- 1100 d. All members of this committee shall serve until the position is filled, or the
- 1101 Annual Business Meeting. Reaffirmation of this committee as a whole by the
- 1102 church membership at a business meeting is required for each twelve (12)
- 1103 month extension.
- 1104 5. Nomination process to select members for the Pastor Search Committee
- 1105 a. With the approval of the nominee, active church members may submit
- 1106 nominations to the church office staff. The church office staff shall place every
- 1107 name submitted for these positions on the nominating ballot.

- 1108 b. Nominations shall be kept open for three (3) weeks.
- 1109 6. Business meeting of the church membership to select members of the Pastor
1110 Search Committee
- 1111 a. For the Senior or Interim Pastor Search Committee, each member may vote
1112 for no more than six (6) nominees using a paper ballot. The six (6) members
1113 shall be elected by plurality vote.
- 1114 b. For the Associate Pastor Search Committee, each member may vote for no
1115 more than five (5) nominees using a paper ballot. The five (5) members shall
1116 be elected by plurality vote.
- 1117 c. Results of the vote are kept per the procedures for a paper ballot in [Business
1118 Meetings of the Church Membership \(Article 7, Section 3\)](#).
- 1119 d. The Church Council shall recommend a budget to the church membership for
1120 a vote which shall include sufficient funds to both operate the committee and
1121 to cover the expenses to present one (1) candidate to the church. Any
1122 extensions to that budget shall require another vote of the church
1123 membership.
- 1124 7. Pastor Search Committee Meetings
- 1125 a. The Chairman of the Church Council shall act as the temporary chairman to
1126 initiate the first meeting for the selection of the chairman and secretary.
- 1127 b. The Pastor Search Committee meetings shall be conducted in closed
1128 session. An invited guest may be present only to provide pertinent testimony
1129 or consultation. An invited guest may not be present during committee
1130 deliberations.
- 1131 c. The Pastor Search Committee meetings shall require two-thirds of the
1132 committee members to constitute a quorum with four (4) concurring votes
1133 deciding any question presented.
- 1134 d. Minutes of these closed sessions shall be recorded and maintained by the
1135 committee secretary and shall be made available to the Church Council.
- 1136 8. Duties of the Pastor Search Committee
- 1137 a. The committee prayerfully shall seek and interview candidates based upon
1138 the qualifications for and the duties of the pastoral position stated in this
1139 constitution and the approved job description.
- 1140 b. Upon recommendation from both the Pastor Search Committee and the
1141 Church Council, the committee shall present only one (1) candidate at a time
1142 to the church membership for consideration. The recommended candidate
1143 shall preach at least two sermons to the congregation.
- 1144 9. Calling of a Pastor
- 1145 a. The recommendation to call a pastor shall come from the Church Council to
1146 the church membership at a business meeting. Notice of this

- 1147 recommendation shall be announced to the congregation at the Sunday
1148 worship service for two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the vote.
- 1149 b. The Church Council shall recommend the salary, benefits, and relocation
1150 package for the called pastor to the church membership for a vote.
- 1151 c. An affirmative vote by written ballot of eighty percent (80%) of the votes cast
1152 shall be necessary to extend a call.
- 1153 d. A non-interim pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time.
- 1154 e. By virtue of office, the status of active member is conferred upon the Pastor
1155 (and his wife, if married) upon commencement of duties (except in the case of
1156 an Interim Pastor).

1157 **Section 2 – Resignation and Dismissal of Pastors**

1158 The name(s) of the pastor (and his wife, if married) are removed from membership upon
1159 the effective date of resignation or dismissal.

1160 **Resignation**

1161 A pastor may resign his position by reading his resignation letter at the Sunday worship
1162 service and submitting this letter to the Chairman of the Church Council. His resignation
1163 shall be effective on the date specified in the letter, not to exceed three (3) months from
1164 the date his letter was read to the church. If a resignation date is not specified, it shall
1165 be determined by the Church Council, not to exceed three (3) months from the date it
1166 was read to the church. Following his resignation, the church has no financial
1167 responsibility towards this pastor beyond the effective date of termination.

1168 **Dismissal**

1169 The dismissal of a pastor is a very serious matter. The action to consider dismissal may
1170 come as a recommendation from the Church Council who shall assess the charges
1171 carefully and shall ensure that applicable Biblical principles be followed, and that this
1172 action is considered prayerfully.

1173 The vote for dismissal of a pastor may be taken only at a business meeting of the
1174 church. The date, time, and purpose of a meeting for the dismissal of a pastor shall be
1175 announced to the congregation during a Sunday worship service at least two (2)
1176 consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the meeting. The Church Council shall
1177 determine whether the pastor shall preach or be placed on paid administrative leave
1178 between the initial announcement and the business meeting. The outcome shall be
1179 decided by a simple majority of the votes cast, which shall be effective immediately. At
1180 the same meeting, the church membership shall vote on a severance package, as
1181 recommended by the Church Council, not to exceed two (2) months of salary and
1182 benefits.

1183 **Section 3 – Selection of Lay Elders, Deacons, and Elections Committee Members-**
1184 **at-Large**

1185 Please refer to the following when reading this section:

- 1186
- [Key Annual Events Timeline \(Figure 2\)](#)
- 1187
- The following process will be used to annually elect, by paper ballot, four (4) lay elders and eight (8) deacons for the Church Council, and three (3) members-at-large for the Elections Committee:
- 1188
- 1189
1. The Elections Committee will prepare a list of the lay elders, deacons, and Elections Committee members-at-large who are presently serving and state their eligibility to be nominated for this position as an incumbent. This list will be made available to the church membership by the first Sunday of March, and all of these positions shall be opened for nominations.
- 1190
- 1191
- 1192
- 1193
- 1194
2. Active members of the church may nominate members for each office after obtaining approval of the candidate and filling out a nomination form. Completed forms shall be returned per the Elections Committee's instructions for the Elections Committee's review.
- 1195
- 1196
- 1197
- 1198
3. Open nominations from the church membership shall be closed at the April Quarterly Business Meeting.
- 1199
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4. After the April Quarterly Business Meeting, the Elections Committee shall interview all of the nominees to determine whether they meet the qualifications as stated in this constitution for that specific position.
 - a. If a nominee does not meet the qualifications, the Elections Committee shall express their reasons privately to both the nominee and the nominator. If the disqualification is contested, either the nominee or the nominator may make an appeal to the Church Council.
 - b. If the qualification of any nominee is contested, an appeal may be made to the Elections Committee. If not satisfied with the decision of the Elections Committee, an appeal may be made to the Church Council.
 - c. If an Elections Committee member or their spouse is nominated for any position, they shall recuse themselves from determining whether they or their spouse meet the qualifications.
 - d. If no qualified member is nominated by the church membership for a position, the Elections Committee will seek to find one (1) or more qualified nominees.
 - e. All the names of qualified members nominated by the church membership shall appear on the ballot.
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5. Three (3) Sundays prior to the Annual Business Meeting, the Elections Committee shall post conspicuously the name(s) of the qualified nominee(s) for each position.
 - a. Each nominee shall provide a written testimony of how they came to faith in Jesus Christ.
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1225 b. Written testimonies for each nominee shall be compiled and made
1226 available to the church membership on the same Sunday that their
1227 name is posted.

1228 6. Candidates are elected by a majority vote. If no candidate receives a majority,
1229 a runoff election between the two (2) candidates receiving the most votes
1230 shall be held at the same meeting. The results of each vote shall be counted
1231 and reported at the meeting. Where there is only one (1) candidate for a
1232 position, then that portion of the ballot shall provide an option for both a “yes”
1233 and a “no” vote.

1234 7. All elected candidates shall assume their office on July 1st. Each current
1235 officer and their newly elected replacement are to work together to facilitate a
1236 smooth transition.

1237 **Section 4 – Resignation or Dismissal of Lay Elders and Deacons**

1238 **Resignation**

1239 Any lay elder or deacon may resign from their position by submitting a letter to the
1240 Church Council. Resignations shall be effective upon receipt of the letter or the date
1241 specified in the letter.

1242 **Dismissal**

1243 Any lay elder or deacon who fails to fulfill the duties of their office or fails to maintain the
1244 qualifications for their position may be dismissed from their office by a vote of the
1245 church membership.

1246 **Section 5 – Vacancies for Lay Elder and Deacon**

1247 Vacancies in the church offices of lay elder or deacon occurring before the expiration of
1248 the term shall be filled for the remainder of the term by a qualified member appointed by
1249 the Church Council ([Refer to Article 5, Section 3.5 and Section 4 for eligibility](#)). These
1250 appointments shall be referred individually to the church membership at the next
1251 business meeting for a vote of affirmation unless the term expires before the next
1252 business meeting.

1253 **Section 6 – Resignation or Dismissal of Elections Committee Members**

1254 **Resignation**

1255 Any Elections Committee member may resign by submitting a letter to the Church
1256 Council. Resignations shall be effective upon receipt of the letter or the date specified in
1257 the letter.

1258 **Dismissal**

1259 Any elected Elections Committee member who fails to fulfill their committee duties or
1260 fails to maintain the qualifications for their position may be dismissed from the
1261 committee by a vote of the church membership. If the appointed lay elder or deacon

1262 fails to fulfill their committee duties, they may be dismissed from the committee by a
1263 vote of the Church Council.

1264 **Section 7 – Vacancies for Elections Committee Members**

1265 Any vacancy in the elected positions may be filled by a qualified member appointed by
1266 the Church Council. Appointments shall be referred individually to the church
1267 membership at the next business meeting for a vote of affirmation. A vacancy in the lay
1268 elder position may be filled by a lay elder appointed by the Church Council. A vacancy
1269 in the deacon position may be filled by a deacon appointed by the Church Council.

1270 **Section 8 – Resignation or Dismissal of Pastor Search Committee Members**

1271 **Resignation**

1272 Any Pastor Search Committee member may resign by submitting a letter to the Church
1273 Council. Resignations shall be effective upon receipt of the letter or the date specified in
1274 the letter.

1275 **Dismissal**

1276 Any elected Pastor Search Committee member who fails to fulfill their committee duties
1277 or fails to maintain the qualifications for their position may be dismissed from the
1278 committee by a vote of the church membership. If the appointed lay elder fails to fulfill
1279 his committee duties, he may be dismissed from the committee by a vote of the Church
1280 Council.

1281 **Section 9 – Vacancies for Pastor Search Committee Members**

1282 Any vacancy in the elected positions may be filled by a qualified member appointed by
1283 the Church Council. Appointments shall be referred individually to the church
1284 membership at the next business meeting for a vote of affirmation. A vacancy in the lay
1285 elder position may be filled by a lay elder appointed by the Church Council.

1286 **ARTICLE 9 – AMENDMENTS**

1287 This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of votes cast by the church
1288 membership at a business meeting. Notice of such an amendment stating the proposed
1289 change, whether by recommendation from the Church Council or by petition, shall be
1290 presented to the congregation at the Sunday worship service for three (3) consecutive
1291 Sundays prior to the date of the vote.

1292 **ARTICLE 10 – CHURCH PROPERTY**

1293 **Section 1 – Purchase or Encumbrance of Debt**

1294 The recommendation for Bethany Baptist Church to purchase real estate, or to
1295 encumber any debt, requires a vote by the church membership at a church business

1296 meeting. Notice of such a recommendation shall be presented to the church at the
1297 Sunday worship service for four (4) consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the vote.
1298 An affirmative vote of sixty-five percent (65%) of votes cast is required for approval. The
1299 quorum for this vote shall be thirty-five percent (35%) of church members 18 years and
1300 older.

1301 **Section 2 – Sale**

1302 The recommendation for Bethany Baptist Church to sell any real estate, and/or any
1303 buildings thereon, requires the vote of the church membership at a church business
1304 meeting. Notice of such a proposal shall be presented to the church at the Sunday
1305 worship service for four (4) consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the vote. An
1306 affirmative vote of sixty-five percent (65%) of votes cast is required for approval. The
1307 quorum for this vote shall be thirty-five percent (35%) of church members 18 years and
1308 older.

1309 **Section 3 – Long-Term Lease or Rental**

1310 The recommendation for Bethany Baptist Church to lease or rent any real estate, and/or
1311 any buildings thereon, for a period greater than one (1) year, requires the vote of the
1312 church membership at a church business meeting. Notice of such a proposal shall be
1313 presented to the church at the Sunday worship service for four (4) consecutive Sundays
1314 prior to the date of the vote. An affirmative vote of sixty-five percent (65%) of votes cast
1315 is required for approval. The quorum for this vote shall be thirty-five percent (35%) of
1316 church members 18 years and older.

1317 **Section 4 – Short-Term Lease or Rental**

1318 The recommendation for Bethany Baptist Church to lease or rent any real estate, and/or
1319 any buildings thereon, for a period of one (1) year or less, requires a vote of the Church
1320 Council and shall be reported at the next quarterly business meeting.

1321 **Section 5 – Dissolution**

1322 In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all property and assets of Bethany
1323 Baptist Church shall be transferred to the North American Baptist Conference.

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APPENDIX A – DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

All Bible quotes are *italicized* and are from the New King James Version 1982.
All members are required to adhere to our Core Beliefs without reservation. In addition, all officers, pastors, staff, teachers, and members of the Elections, Constitution and Policy, and Pastor Search Committees are required to adhere and to teach only that which is consistent with the following Doctrinal Statement. Our intent is to lead the congregation toward unity in the fullness of God’s truth.
While the Doctrinal Statement details our beliefs on certain issues, in practice we believe and teach all of the Bible, from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21.

- [A1 – Introduction](#)
- [A2 – The Bible](#)
- [A3 – The Godhead](#)
- [A4 – God the Father](#)
- [A5 – God the Son](#)
- [A6 – God the Holy Spirit](#)
- [A7 – Creation](#)
- [A8 – Angels](#)
- [A9 – Fallen Angels](#)
- [A10 – Mankind](#)
- [A11 – Fall of Mankind](#)
- [A12 – The Great Flood](#)
- [A13 – Salvation](#)
- [A14 – The Church](#)
- [A15 – Governance of Local Congregation](#)
- [A16 – Ordinances](#)
- [A17 – Christians in the World](#)
- [A18 – Marriage, Sexuality, and Family](#)
- [A19 – Rapture and The Great Tribulation](#)
- [A20 – Second Coming of Christ and Establishment of Millennial Kingdom](#)
- [A21 – Judgment and Eternity](#)
- [A22 – Conclusion](#)

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A1 – Introduction
“Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty? (Job 11:7)
All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.” (Luke 10:22)
For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may

1364 *be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the*
1365 *creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the*
1366 *things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without*
1367 *excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were*
1368 *thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*
1369 *(Romans 1:18-21)*

1370 *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things,*
1371 *yes, the deep things of God. (I Corinthians 2:10)*

1372 *For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—if indeed you have*
1373 *heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that*
1374 *by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by*
1375 *which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),*
1376 *which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been*
1377 *revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be*
1378 *fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the*
1379 *gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to*
1380 *me by the effective working of His power. (Ephesians 3:1-7)*

1381 *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the*
1382 *prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir*
1383 *of all things, through whom also He made the worlds. (Hebrews 1:1-2)*

1384 **God has revealed Himself to us by His works and by His Word. Because of the**
1385 **illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, we can see His invisible attributes through**
1386 **His creation, and we can know Him through His Word.**

1387 **A2 – The Bible**

1388 *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure,*
1389 *making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The*
1390 *commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD is*
1391 *clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*
1392 *More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than*
1393 *honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping*
1394 *them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11)*

1395 *The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever. (Isaiah*
1396 *40:8)*

1397 *For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by*
1398 *no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. (Matthew 5:18)*

1399 *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. (John 17:17)*

1400 *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and*
1401 *that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:31)*

1402 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for*
1403 *correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete,*
1404 *thoroughly equipped for every good work. (II Timothy 3:16-17)*

1405 *For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,*
1406 *piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a*
1407 *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)*

1408 *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for*
1409 *prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were*
1410 *moved by the Holy Spirit. (II Peter 1:20-21)*

1411 **The Holy Bible is God's Word, comprised of only the 39 canonical books of the**
1412 **Old Testament and 27 canonical books of the New Testament. The canon is now**
1413 **complete and closed. It was God-breathed to holy men of God that were moved to**
1414 **write the very words of Scripture. It is inerrant in the original manuscripts and has**
1415 **been preserved by God. It is part of actual history and is best understood literally**
1416 **within its historical context. The final guide to interpretation of Scripture is**
1417 **Scripture itself. The Bible is the supreme and final authority on all matters and is**
1418 **absolute truth. It is the sole standard by which to determine our beliefs, conduct,**
1419 **and knowledge of right and wrong. It is the truth by which God brings people into**
1420 **a saving relationship with Himself, and by which He leads us into Christian**
1421 **maturity.**

1422 **A3 – The Godhead**

1423 *Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with*
1424 *all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)*

1425 *For I proclaim the name of the Lord: ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His*
1426 *work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice;*
1427 *righteous and upright is He. (Deuteronomy 32:3-4)*

1428 *But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and*
1429 *abundant in mercy and truth. (Psalm 86:15)*

1430 *Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has taught Him? With*
1431 *whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of*
1432 *justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?*
1433 *(Isaiah 40:13-14)*

1434 *“To whom then will you liken Me; or to whom shall I be equal?” says the Holy One. Lift*
1435 *up your eyes on high; and see who has created these things; who brings out their host*
1436 *by number; He calls them all by name; By the greatness of His might; and the strength*
1437 *of His power; not one is missing. (Isaiah 40:25-26)*

1438 *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold,*
1439 *the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove*
1440 *and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, “This is My*
1441 *beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16-17)*

1442 *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:24)*

1443 *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and*
1444 *invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were*
1445 *created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things*
1446 *consist. (Colossians 1:16-17)*

1447 *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and*
1448 *glory forever and ever. Amen. (I Timothy 1:17)*

1449 *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)*

1450 **There is but one living and true God, an unchanging Spirit eternally existing in**
1451 **three coequal Persons; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God**
1452 **is dependent on nothing, but causes all else to depend on Him. God is absolute,**
1453 **complete in Himself and limited by nothing outside His own Divine Being. God is**
1454 **perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy, and love. God is all-**
1455 **knowing, all-powerful and everywhere-present. All three Persons have precisely**
1456 **the same nature, attributes, and perfections, are equal in essence, power and**
1457 **glory, and are worthy of the same homage, confidence, and obedience. Together**
1458 **they act as Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler over the universe.**

1459 **A4 – God the Father**

1460 *Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to*
1461 *deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus*
1462 *replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then*
1463 *John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that*
1464 *moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and*
1465 *lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I*
1466 *am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)*

1467 *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will*
1468 *your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:11)*

1469 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to*
1470 *those who believe in His name. (John 1:12)*

1471 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every*
1472 *spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the*
1473 *foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*
1474 *having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the*
1475 *good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us*
1476 *accepted in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:3-6)*

1477 **God the Father reigns with providential care over His creation. He hears and**
1478 **answers prayer. He initiated salvation by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to Earth**
1479 **to die for the sins of humanity and is Father to those who, by faith, accept His**
1480 **Son as Lord and Savior.**

1481 **A5 – God the Son**

1482 *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to*
1483 *Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then*
1484 *Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example,*
1485 *was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold,*
1486 *an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not*
1487 *be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy*
1488 *Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will*

1489 *save His people from their sins.” So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was*
1490 *spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child,*
1491 *and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with*
1492 *us.” Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded*
1493 *him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn*
1494 *Son. And he called His name JESUS. (Matthew 1:18-25)*

1495 *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of*
1496 *the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the*
1497 *people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick*
1498 *people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were*
1499 *demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Great multitudes*
1500 *followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the*
1501 *Jordan. (Matthew 4:23-25)*

1502 *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon*
1503 *will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will*
1504 *be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the*
1505 *tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of*
1506 *heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a*
1507 *trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of*
1508 *heaven to the other”.* (Matthew 24:29-31)

1509 *When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will*
1510 *sit on the throne of His glory. (Matthew 25:31)*

1511 *"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him*
1512 *the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his*
1513 *kingdom will never end."* (Luke 1:32-33)

1514 *In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
1515 *(John 1:1)*

1516 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as*
1517 *of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

1518 *Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a*
1519 *cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven*
1520 *as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of*
1521 *Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up*
1522 *from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”*
1523 *(Acts 1:9-11)*

1524 *Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is*
1525 *even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. (Romans 8:34)*

1526 *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins*
1527 *according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third*
1528 *day according to the Scriptures. (I Corinthians 15:3-4)*

1529 *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the*
1530 *righteousness of God in Him. (II Corinthians 5:21)*

1531 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the*
1532 *life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave*
1533 *Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)*

1534 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God,*
1535 *did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation,*
1536 *taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in*
1537 *appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death,*
1538 *even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him*
1539 *the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should*
1540 *bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that*
1541 *every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
1542 *(Philippians 2:5-11)*

1543 *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was*
1544 *in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)*

1545 **God the Son became man, Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit**
1546 **and born of the virgin Mary. Being fully God and fully man at the same time, He**
1547 **revealed God through His sinless life, miracles, and teaching. He provided**
1548 **salvation through His atoning death in our place and by His bodily resurrection.**
1549 **He ascended into heaven, where He rules over all creation and intercedes for all**
1550 **believers. He is coming to rapture all believers to be with Him forever. After the**
1551 **Tribulation, He will return physically in power and glory to reign as King upon the**
1552 **earth and to judge the world by purging it from its sinful condition, making it new**
1553 **in righteousness forevermore.**

1554 **A6 – God the Holy Spirit**

1555 *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you*
1556 *all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (John 14:26)*

1557 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go*
1558 *away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when*
1559 *He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*
1560 *(John 16:7-8)*

1561 *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be*
1562 *witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the*
1563 *earth." (Acts 1:8)*

1564 *And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was*
1565 *shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God*
1566 *with boldness. (Acts 4:31)*

1567 *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised*
1568 *Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who*
1569 *dwells in you. (Romans 8:11)*

1570 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. (Romans*
1571 *8:16)*

1572 *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan*
1573 *within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. (Romans*
1574 *8:23)*

1575 *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should*
1576 *pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings*
1577 *which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26)*

1578 *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things,*
1579 *yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit*
1580 *of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of*
1581 *God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God,*
1582 *that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things*
1583 *we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit*
1584 *teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (I Corinthians 2:10-13)*

1585 *But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually*
1586 *as He wills. (I Corinthians 12:11)*

1587 *For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one*
1588 *understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. But he who prophesies*
1589 *speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. He who speaks in a tongue*
1590 *edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. (I Corinthians 14:2-4)*

1591 *Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but*
1592 *prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. (I Corinthians 14:22)*

1593 *If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let*
1594 *one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him*
1595 *speak to himself and to God. (I Corinthians 14:27-28)*

1596 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness,*
1597 *faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

1598 *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation;*
1599 *in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is*
1600 *the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to*
1601 *the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)*

1602 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and*
1603 *some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for*
1604 *the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the*
1605 *knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the*
1606 *fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried*
1607 *about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of*
1608 *deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who*
1609 *is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every*
1610 *joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share,*
1611 *causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16)*

1612 *God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts*
1613 *of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? (Hebrews 2:4)*

1614 **God the Holy Spirit is the Author and Interpreter of Scripture. Through Himself**
1615 **and His Word, He convicts men of their sinfulness and of the righteousness of**
1616 **the Lord Jesus Christ. In this age, He regenerates and baptizes all believers into**
1617 **the body of Christ, permanently indwells every child of God from the moment**
1618 **they are saved, and seals the believer unto the day of final redemption.**

1619 **The Holy Spirit endows every believer with one or more spiritual gifts for works of**
1620 **service. God is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the equipping of the**
1621 **saints today. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or**
1622 **necessary sign of the baptism nor of the filling of the Holy Spirit. He empowers,**
1623 **guides, teaches, fills, sanctifies and produces the fruit of Christlikeness in all who**
1624 **yield to Him.**

1625 **A7 – Creation**

1626 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)*

1627 *Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the*
1628 *evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth, and all*
1629 *the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He*
1630 *had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.*
1631 *(Genesis 1:31 - 2:2)*

1632 *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your*
1633 *work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no*
1634 *work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female*
1635 *servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the*
1636 *Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the*
1637 *seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. (Exodus*
1638 *20:8-11)*

1639 *You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all*
1640 *things under his feet, all sheep and oxen—even the beasts of the field, the birds of the*
1641 *air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas. (Psalm 8:6-8)*

1642 *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath*
1643 *of His mouth. (Psalm 33:6)*

1644 *For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. (Psalm 33:9)*

1645 *Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed*
1646 *him, yes, I have made him. (Isaiah 43:7)*

1647 *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and*
1648 *invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were*
1649 *created through Him and for Him. (Colossians 1:16)*

1650 **Out of nothing, God created, formed, and filled the universe by His powerful**
1651 **Word. All things in the universe were created by God in the six days of creation**
1652 **as described in Genesis. Upon completing His work of forming and filling the**
1653 **universe, God proclaimed His creation very good, all being free of sin. God then**
1654 **rested on the seventh day, thereby providing a divine pattern for man to work six**
1655 **days and rest every seventh day. He planned all things by His wisdom and**
1656 **controls all things by His sovereign power, all for His own glory.**

1657 **A8 – Angels**

1658 *Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in*
1659 *heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew*
1660 *18:10)*

1661 *But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of*
1662 *God worship Him.” And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits and His*
1663 *ministers a flame of fire.” (Hebrews 1:6-7)*

1664 *Are they not ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*
1665 *(Hebrews 1:14)*

1666 *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly*
1667 *Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, (Hebrews 12:22)*

1668 *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living*
1669 *creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten*
1670 *thousand, and thousands of thousands (Revelation 5:11)*

1671 *Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to*
1672 *worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me,*
1673 *“See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the*
1674 *prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” (Revelation*
1675 *22:8-9)*

1676 **Angels are an order of spiritual beings created and empowered by God to serve**
1677 **Him and do His will. They are not to be worshiped.**

1678 **A9 – Fallen Angels**

1679 *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down*
1680 *to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: “I will*
1681 *ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the*
1682 *mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the*
1683 *heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” Yet you shall be brought down to*
1684 *Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)*

1685 *Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Son of man, take up a*
1686 *lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were*
1687 *the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the*
1688 *garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and*
1689 *diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The*
1690 *workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were*
1691 *created. “You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the*
1692 *holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were*
1693 *perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. “By*
1694 *the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned;*
1695 *therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you,*
1696 *O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. “Your heart was lifted up because*
1697 *of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to*
1698 *the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you. “You defiled your*

1699 sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore I
1700 brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth
1701 in the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at
1702 you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever.” (Ezekiel 28:11-19)

1703 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the
1704 everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:41)

1705 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the
1706 devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against
1707 powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of
1708 wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:11-12)

1709 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion,
1710 seeking whom he may devour. (I Peter 5:8)

1711 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and
1712 delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment. (II Peter 2:4)

1713 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose
1714 the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (I John
1715 3:8)

1716 **One of the angels, Lucifer, rebelled against God and became the demon, Satan,**
1717 **also called the devil. He is a fallen angel and the author of sin. He incurred the**
1718 **judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator, taking a great company of**
1719 **angels with him in his fall, and introducing sin into the human race by tempting**
1720 **Eve. These fallen angels, now called demons, are led by Satan in opposition to all**
1721 **that has to do with God, His purposes and His people. The Lord Jesus Christ**
1722 **defeated Satan at the cross. Satan and his demons are doomed and ultimately**
1723 **will be cast into the Lake of Fire.**

1724 **A10 – Mankind**

1725 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them
1726 have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over
1727 all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created
1728 man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He
1729 created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply;
1730 fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the
1731 air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26-28)

1732 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils
1733 the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

1734 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took
1735 one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God
1736 had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam
1737 said: “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman,
1738 because she was taken out of Man.” (Genesis 2:21-23)

1739 What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? For
1740 You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory

1741 *and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You*
1742 *have put all things under his feet. (Psalm 8:4-6)*

1743 *Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed*
1744 *him, yes, I have made him. (Isaiah 43:7)*

1745 **God created one man, Adam, and one woman, Eve, in His own image to glorify**
1746 **Himself, to enjoy fellowship with Him, and to have dominion over and be**
1747 **stewards of His creation. Mankind was created free of sin with a rational nature,**
1748 **intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God. All**
1749 **humans are descended from Adam and Eve.**

1750 **A11 – Fall of Mankind**

1751 *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may*
1752 *freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the*
1753 *day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16-17)*

1754 *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the*
1755 *eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave*
1756 *to her husband with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6)*

1757 *Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have*
1758 *eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: Cursed*
1759 *is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.” (Genesis*
1760 *3:17)*

1761 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)*

1762 *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and*
1763 *thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)*

1764 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
1765 *(Romans 6:23)*

1766 *Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear*
1767 *sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the*
1768 *commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual,*
1769 *but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will*
1770 *to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I*
1771 *agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells*
1772 *in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is*
1773 *present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. (Romans 7:13-18)*

1774 *For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman*
1775 *being deceived, fell into transgression. (1 Timothy 2:13-14)*

1776 *Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted*
1777 *by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn*
1778 *away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to*
1779 *sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (James 1:13-15)*

1780 **Adam willfully disobeyed God’s command, and his disobedience caused all of**
1781 **creation to be cursed. The first recorded physical death should have been Adam**
1782 **because of his sin, but God sacrificed an animal as a substitute. By birth as a**

1783 **descendant of Adam we have a sin-nature. Individually by choice, we are all**
1784 **sinner and fall short of the glory of God. Everyone is personally accountable to**
1785 **God for his own thoughts, actions, and beliefs as compared to God's Holiness.**
1786 **The consequence of sin is that we are all destined to eternal separation from God**
1787 **in spiritual death. Mankind by himself is unable to change this total depravity and**
1788 **alienation from God.**

1789 **A12 – The Great Flood**

1790 *Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every*
1791 *intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that*
1792 *He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, "I*
1793 *will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast,*
1794 *creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah*
1795 *found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (Genesis 6:5-8)*

1796 *Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark,*
1797 *and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the*
1798 *earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. And the waters prevailed*
1799 *exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered.*
1800 *The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. And all*
1801 *flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing*
1802 *that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the*
1803 *spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which*
1804 *were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air.*
1805 *They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark*
1806 *remained alive. (Genesis 7:17-23)*

1807 *And [God] did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a*
1808 *preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly." (II Peter*
1809 *2:5)*

1810 **As portrayed in Genesis, the Great Flood was a historic event, worldwide in**
1811 **extent and effect. The Great Flood was not only judgment by God of the**
1812 **wickedness of man, but also a demonstration of His grace and faithfulness in that**
1813 **He preserved the human race through Noah's family.**

1814 **A13 – Salvation**

1815 *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her*
1816 *Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. (Genesis 3:15)*

1817 *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes*
1818 *in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the*
1819 *world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:16-*
1820 *17)*

1821 *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him*
1822 *up at the last day. (John 6:44)*

1823 *Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom*
1824 *God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His*

1825 *righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were*
1826 *previously committed. (Romans 3:24-25)*

1827 *Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It*
1828 *shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,*
1829 *who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our*
1830 *justification. (Romans 4:23-25)*

1831 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away;*
1832 *behold, all things have become new. (II Corinthians 5:17)*

1833 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift*
1834 *of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

1835 *For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to*
1836 *reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven,*
1837 *having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated*
1838 *and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of*
1839 *His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His*
1840 *sight. (Colossians 1:19-22)*

1841 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He*
1842 *saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom*
1843 *He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been*
1844 *justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*
1845 *(Titus 3:5-7)*

1846 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and*
1847 *the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no*
1848 *sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful*
1849 *and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that*
1850 *we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children,*
1851 *these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an*
1852 *Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation*
1853 *for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. (I John 1:7-2:2)*

1854 *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made*
1855 *known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as*
1856 *he is. (I John 3:2)*

1857 **Despite our sin, God continues to love us and has provided for our salvation. He**
1858 **promised Adam that He would send a Savior to overcome sin. God's Son, the**
1859 **Lord Jesus Christ, entered humanity, born of the virgin Mary. Jesus Christ lived a**
1860 **perfect life and fulfilled the law completely. While on the cross in our place, and**
1861 **as our substitute, He was separated from the Father. With His life-blood, He made**
1862 **the payment for sin. His payment was sufficient to atone for all sin. Salvation is a**
1863 **free gift of God to all and must be received personally and individually by grace,**
1864 **through faith in Christ alone, utterly apart from any human merit or work.**

1865 **Salvation is the permanent redemption by Christ of the whole person from sin**
1866 **and death. By regeneration we become new creatures in Christ Jesus, because of**
1867 **a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which**
1868 **the sinner responds in repentance toward God and in faith in the Lord Jesus**
1869 **Christ. By justification God graciously and fully acquits believers, imputes the**

1870 **righteousness of Jesus Christ to each one and brings them into a relationship of**
1871 **peace and favor with Himself. By sanctification believers grow into moral and**
1872 **spiritual maturity, through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit's indwelling.**
1873 **By glorification, the culmination of salvation, God rewards the redeemed with**
1874 **everlasting life.**

1875 **A14 – The Church**

1876 *Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three*
1877 *thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles'*
1878 *doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Acts 2:41-42)*

1879 *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should*
1880 *be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the*
1881 *fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The*
1882 *Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is*
1883 *My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." Concerning the gospel they are*
1884 *enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the*
1885 *fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. (Romans 11:25-29)*

1886 *For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same*
1887 *function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one*
1888 *another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use*
1889 *them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in*
1890 *our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who*
1891 *gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with*
1892 *cheerfulness. (Romans 12:4-8)*

1893 *All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but*
1894 *not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being. (I*
1895 *Corinthians 10:23-24)*

1896 *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but*
1897 *the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works*
1898 *all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to*
1899 *one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge*
1900 *through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings*
1901 *by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another*
1902 *discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation*
1903 *of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one*
1904 *individually as He wills. (I Corinthians 12: 4-11)*

1905 *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the*
1906 *church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:22-23)*

1907 *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with*
1908 *which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing*
1909 *with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of*
1910 *peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)*

1911 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and*
1912 *some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for*

1913 *the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the*
1914 *knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the*
1915 *fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried*
1916 *about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of*
1917 *deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who*
1918 *is the head - Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every*
1919 *joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share,*
1920 *causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16)*

1921 *For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church; and He*
1922 *is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the*
1923 *wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ*
1924 *also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her*
1925 *with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious*
1926 *church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and*
1927 *without blemish. (Ephesians 5:23-27)*

1928 *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking*
1929 *the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one*
1930 *another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)*

1931 *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:11)*

1932 *We love Him because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)*

1933 **By the Holy Spirit all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are immediately made**
1934 **members of one spiritual Body, the Church, the bride of Christ, of which Christ is**
1935 **the Head. The formation of the Church began on the Day of Pentecost and will be**
1936 **completed at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church has not replaced**
1937 **God's chosen people, Israel, and is distinct from them.**

1938 **Believers are commanded to meet together for the purpose of glorifying God. We**
1939 **worship God in prayer and by instruction from Scripture for spiritual growth and**
1940 **development, singing, giving, fellowship, and observing the ordinances of**
1941 **baptism and the Lord's Supper. Although part of the Church, the Body of Christ,**
1942 **each local congregation of believers is independent and autonomous under**
1943 **Christ.**

1944 **The Holy Spirit gives all who have put their faith in Jesus Christ spiritual gifts to**
1945 **be used to benefit the body of Christ. Each believer is to be a faithful steward of**
1946 **the time, talents and material possessions that God has entrusted to him and use**
1947 **them for His glory.**

1948 **All members of the body of Christ are to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of**
1949 **peace and love one another. Individually, we have religious liberty rooted in**
1950 **Scripture and freedom of conscience with direct accountability to God.**

1951 **A15 – Governance of Local Congregation**

1952 *Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the*
1953 *Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give*
1954 *ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased*
1955 *the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and*

1956 *Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch,*
1957 *whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on*
1958 *them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly*
1959 *in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:3-7)*

1960 *So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they*
1961 *commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:23)*

1962 *Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of*
1963 *their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also*
1964 *named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. (Acts 15:22)*

1965 *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has*
1966 *made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own*
1967 *blood. (Acts 20:28)*

1968 *I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that*
1969 *you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in*
1970 *whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and*
1971 *of myself also. (Romans 16:1)*

1972 *Let all things be done decently and in order. (1 Corinthians 14:40)*

1973 *And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the*
1974 *dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Colossians 1:18)*

1975 *The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the*
1976 *sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the*
1977 *flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly,*
1978 *not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but*
1979 *being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the*
1980 *crown of glory that does not fade away. (1 Peter 5:1-4)*

1981 **Under the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word, our church governs itself**
1982 **congregationally. In order to assist in meeting the spiritual and physical needs**
1983 **within our congregation, church members have organized teams to serve in**
1984 **specific areas of ministry. These ministry teams are led by elders, deacons, and**
1985 **deaconesses, who meet together as a Church Council, manage the affairs of the**
1986 **church, and present major matters to the church membership for a vote. A vote**
1987 **by the church membership shall determine our officers, polity and all other**
1988 **congregational business.**

1989 **A16 – Ordinances**

1990 *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the*
1991 *Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I*
1992 *have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*
1993 *(Matthew 28:19-20)*

1994 *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was*
1995 *raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in*
1996 *newness of life. (Romans 6:4)*

1997 *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on*
1998 *the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks,*

1999 *He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is for you; do this in*
2000 *remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying,*
2001 *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in*
2002 *remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you*
2003 *proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)*

2004 **The Church observes two ordinances: baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Believers**
2005 **are commanded to be immersed in water in the name of the Father, the Son and**
2006 **the Holy Spirit. It is the testimony of a believer's new life in Christ by identifying**
2007 **with Jesus' death, burial, resurrection and a commitment to walk in newness of**
2008 **life. The Lord's Supper is observed to remember and proclaim Jesus' death and**
2009 **resurrection until He returns. The elements of communion are symbols of the**
2010 **flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. Neither the participation in the Lord's Supper nor**
2011 **baptism are a means of salvation but an outward expression of an inner faith.**

2012 **A17 – Christians in the World**

2013 *You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It*
2014 *is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are*
2015 *the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a*
2016 *lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in*
2017 *the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and*
2018 *glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16)*

2019 *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."*
2020 *(Mark 16:15)*

2021 *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not*
2022 *expect. (Luke 12:40)*

2023 *And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the*
2024 *earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their*
2025 *dwellings, (Acts 17:26)*

2026 *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they*
2027 *believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a*
2028 *preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How*
2029 *beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of*
2030 *good things!" (Romans 10:14-15)*

2031 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies*
2032 *a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not*
2033 *be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you*
2034 *may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)*

2035 *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except*
2036 *from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever*
2037 *resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring*
2038 *judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you*
2039 *want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the*
2040 *same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does*
2041 *not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him*

2042 *who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also*
2043 *for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's*
2044 *ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes*
2045 *to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom*
2046 *honor. (Romans 13:1-7)*

2047 *Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. Now you Philippians*
2048 *know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no*
2049 *church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in*
2050 *Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift,*
2051 *but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full,*
2052 *having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma,*
2053 *an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. (Philippians 4:14-18)*

2054 *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of*
2055 *thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a*
2056 *quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (I Timothy 2:1-2)*

2057 *But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men*
2058 *be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women*
2059 *likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine,*
2060 *teachers of good things - that they admonish the young women to love their husbands,*
2061 *to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own*
2062 *husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise, exhort the young*
2063 *men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in*
2064 *doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be*
2065 *condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say*
2066 *of you. Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in*
2067 *all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may*
2068 *adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. For the grace of God that brings*
2069 *salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly*
2070 *lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the*
2071 *blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who*
2072 *gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for*
2073 *Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort,*
2074 *and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you. Remind them to be subject to*
2075 *rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one,*
2076 *to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. (Titus 2:1-3:2)*

2077 *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and*
2078 *widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (James 1:27)*

2079 *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor*
2080 *as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by*
2081 *the law as transgressors. (James 2:8-9)*

2082 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to*
2083 *everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*
2084 *having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile*
2085 *your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to*
2086 *suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (I Peter 3:15-17)*

2087 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of*
2088 *the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the*
2089 *eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is*
2090 *passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John*
2091 *2:15-17)*

2092 **Believers are the salt and light in society, being in the world, but separate from it.**
2093 **They should walk, talk, dress and act in a way which reflects Scriptural**
2094 **standards.**

2095 **Believers are to oppose greed, selfishness and vice, to promote truth, justice and**
2096 **peace, to aid the needy, and to preserve the dignity of all people regardless of**
2097 **their condition or skin color. Racial distinctions are an unbiblical, man-made**
2098 **concept. Every human is directly descended from Adam and Eve through Noah,**
2099 **and therefore all humans are of the same ancestry.**

2100 **Believers are commanded to take the message of our Lord Jesus Christ into the**
2101 **world in which we work and live and support others, through prayer and finances,**
2102 **who take the message of Jesus into the world.**

2103 **All believers should live their lives in the expectation that Jesus Christ could**
2104 **return at any moment.**

2105 **Church and state exist by the will of God. God commands us to submit ourselves**
2106 **to civil authority, to obey and support our government in matters not contrary to**
2107 **Scripture, and to pray for our civil leaders.**

2108 **A18 – Marriage, Sexuality, and Family**

2109 *The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper*
2110 *suitable for him." Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the*
2111 *field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name*
2112 *them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man*
2113 *gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for*
2114 *Adam no suitable helper was found. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on*
2115 *Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.*
2116 *Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He*
2117 *brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my*
2118 *flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man*
2119 *shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one*
2120 *flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*
2121 *(Genesis 2:18-25)*

2122 *"You shall not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14)*

2123 *Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to*
2124 *them: 'I am the Lord your God. According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you*
2125 *dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am*
2126 *bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall observe*
2127 *My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. You*
2128 *shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live*
2129 *by them: I am the Lord. 'None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to*

2130 *uncover his nakedness: I am the Lord. The nakedness of your father or the nakedness*
2131 *of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her*
2132 *nakedness. The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it is your father's*
2133 *nakedness. The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter*
2134 *of your mother, whether born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not*
2135 *uncover. The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their*
2136 *nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs is your own nakedness. The nakedness of*
2137 *your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father—she is your sister—you shall not*
2138 *uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister;*
2139 *she is near of kin to your father. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's*
2140 *sister, for she is near of kin to your mother. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your*
2141 *father's brother. You shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt. You shall not uncover*
2142 *the nakedness of your daughter-in-law—she is your son's wife—you shall not uncover*
2143 *her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your*
2144 *brother's nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her*
2145 *daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover*
2146 *her nakedness. They are near of kin to her. It is wickedness. Nor shall you take a*
2147 *woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive. 'Also*
2148 *you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her*
2149 *customary impurity. Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to*
2150 *defile yourself with her. And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the*
2151 *fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. You shall not*
2152 *lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. Nor shall you mate with any*
2153 *animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate*
2154 *with it. It is perversion. 'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these*
2155 *the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. For the land is defiled;*
2156 *therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its*
2157 *inhabitants. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not*
2158 *commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who*
2159 *dwells among you (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were*
2160 *before you, and thus the land is defiled), lest the land vomit you out also when you*
2161 *defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. For whoever commits any of*
2162 *these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their*
2163 *people. 'Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these*
2164 *abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile*
2165 *yourselves by them: I am the Lord your God.'” (Leviticus 18:1-30)*

2166 *“Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the*
2167 *LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land*
2168 *which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep*
2169 *all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and*
2170 *your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore*
2171 *hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you*
2172 *may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land*
2173 *flowing with milk and honey.’” Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!*
2174 *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all*
2175 *your strength. “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You*

2176 shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your
2177 house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall
2178 bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.
2179 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy
2180 6:1-9)

2181 Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like
2182 arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man
2183 who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their
2184 enemies in the gate. (Psalm 127:3-5)

2185 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works,
2186 and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was
2187 made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my
2188 substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days
2189 fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. (Psalm 139:14-16)

2190 But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks
2191 godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with
2192 the wife of his youth. (Malachi 2:15)

2193 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed
2194 adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28)

2195 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that He departed from
2196 Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And great multitudes
2197 followed Him, and He healed them there. The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him,
2198 and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" And
2199 He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the
2200 beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave
2201 his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So
2202 then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let
2203 not man separate." (Matthew 19:1-6)

2204 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had
2205 appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And
2206 Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven
2207 and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the
2208 name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all
2209 things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the
2210 age." Amen. (Matthew 28:16-20)

2211 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and
2212 unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may
2213 be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the
2214 creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the
2215 things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without
2216 excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were
2217 thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
2218 Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible
2219 God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and
2220 creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their

2221 hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for
2222 the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed
2223 forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their
2224 women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men,
2225 leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men
2226 committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error
2227 which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God
2228 gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled
2229 with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness;
2230 full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters,
2231 haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
2232 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the
2233 righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death,
2234 not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (Romans 1:18-32)

2235 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by
2236 the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ,
2237 to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short
2238 of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in
2239 Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to
2240 demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the
2241 sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His
2242 righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
2243 (Romans 3:21-26)

2244 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord
2245 Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we
2246 stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in
2247 tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance,
2248 character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of
2249 God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For
2250 when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely
2251 for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare
2252 to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners,
2253 Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be
2254 saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to
2255 God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be
2256 saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus
2257 Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (Romans 5:1-11)

2258 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.
2259 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present
2260 yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of
2261 righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under
2262 law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under
2263 grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to
2264 obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of
2265 obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves
2266 of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

2267 *And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in*
2268 *human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your*
2269 *members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness,*
2270 *so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you*
2271 *were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have*
2272 *then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.*
2273 *But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have*
2274 *your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the*
2275 *gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:12-23)*

2276 *For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does*
2277 *those things shall live by them.” But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do*
2278 *not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down from*
2279 *above) or, “‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the*
2280 *dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”*
2281 *(that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord*
2282 *Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be*
2283 *saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth*
2284 *confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him*
2285 *will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the*
2286 *same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For “whoever calls on the name of*
2287 *the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:5-13)*

2288 *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual*
2289 *immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife!*
2290 *And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed*
2291 *might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in*
2292 *spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.*
2293 *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my*
2294 *spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the*
2295 *destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your*
2296 *glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*
2297 *Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are*
2298 *unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us*
2299 *keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but*
2300 *with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep*
2301 *company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually*
2302 *immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since*
2303 *then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep*
2304 *company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an*
2305 *idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a*
2306 *person. (I Corinthians 5:1-11)*

2307 *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be*
2308 *deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor*
2309 *sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will*
2310 *inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you*
2311 *were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of*
2312 *our God. (I Corinthians 6:9-11)*

2313 *Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as*
2314 *one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. I suppose therefore that this is*
2315 *good because of the present distress—that it is good for a man to remain as he is: Are*
2316 *you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not*
2317 *seek a wife. But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she*
2318 *has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.*
2319 *(I Corinthians 7:25-28)*

2320 *But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the*
2321 *Lord—how he may please the Lord. (I Corinthians 7:32)*

2322 *Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.*
2323 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive*
2324 *the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*
2325 *Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to*
2326 *God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. For we do not commend*
2327 *ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may*
2328 *have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. For if we are*
2329 *beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. For the love of*
2330 *Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He*
2331 *died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who*
2332 *died for them and rose again. Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to*
2333 *the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know*
2334 *Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things*
2335 *have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who*
2336 *has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of*
2337 *reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not*
2338 *imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*
2339 *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we*
2340 *implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no*
2341 *sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (II*
2342 *Corinthians 5:9-21)*

2343 *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it*
2344 *is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham*
2345 *might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the*
2346 *Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:13-14)*

2347 *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness,*
2348 *lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish*
2349 *ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of*
2350 *which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice*
2351 *such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)*

2352 *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the*
2353 *riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,*
2354 *having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which*
2355 *He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might*
2356 *gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on*
2357 *earth—in Him. (Ephesians 1:7-10)*

2358 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,”*
2359 *which is the first commandment with a promise: “that it may be well with you and you*
2360 *may live long on the earth.” And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but*
2361 *bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4)*

2362 *Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound*
2363 *more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;*
2364 *for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the*
2365 *will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that*
2366 *each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not*
2367 *in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take*
2368 *advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of*
2369 *all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to*
2370 *uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but*
2371 *God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit. (I Thessalonians 4:1-8)*

2372 *As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge*
2373 *some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless*
2374 *genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. Now*
2375 *the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience,*
2376 *and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk,*
2377 *desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things*
2378 *which they affirm. But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this:*
2379 *that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate,*
2380 *for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and*
2381 *murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for*
2382 *liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,*
2383 *according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. (I*
2384 *Timothy 1:3-11)*

2385 *I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living*
2386 *and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season*
2387 *and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the*
2388 *time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own*
2389 *desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and*
2390 *they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be*
2391 *watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*
2392 *(II Timothy 4:1-5)*

2393 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that,*
2394 *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in*
2395 *the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God*
2396 *and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every*
2397 *lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*
2398 *Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you. (Titus*
2399 *2:11-15)*

2400 *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more*
2401 *perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood*
2402 *of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for*

2403 *all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the*
2404 *ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how*
2405 *much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself*
2406 *without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*
2407 *And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the*
2408 *redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called*
2409 *may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:11-15)*

2410 *Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers*
2411 *God will judge. (Hebrews 13:4)*

2412 *Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know*
2413 *that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever*
2414 *abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. (1 John*
2415 *3:4-6)*

2416 **The family is the basic unit of society and is composed of persons related to one**
2417 **another by marriage, blood or adoption. While singleness is also blessed by God,**
2418 **He created men and women to complement one another and ordained marriage**
2419 **as a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman.**

2420 **Marriage is more than a contract, it is a covenant before God, in which He joins**
2421 **one man and one woman together “in one flesh” and forbids anyone to break it.**
2422 **As a divinely ordained institution, it derives its meaning from God alone and is**
2423 **thus not subject to redefinition by any other authority.**

2424 **Sexual intimacy is designed by God, and when expressed between a man and a**
2425 **woman united in marriage, is right and acceptable. However, the practice of any**
2426 **form of sexual immorality, as defined in the Bible, is sinful, offensive to God, and**
2427 **incurs His judgment. Therefore, sexual intimacy is legitimate only within the**
2428 **boundaries of marriage. God ordained marriage for companionship, to**
2429 **complement each other and to raise godly offspring. Children, from the moment**
2430 **of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible**
2431 **for bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.**

2432 **Furthermore, because the Bible teaches that marriage is only between one man**
2433 **and one woman as determined by their biological sex, any recognition of other**
2434 **unions as legitimate marriage is contrary to the Bible. As a matter of belief,**
2435 **doctrine, and religious practice, it is our conviction that the term “marriage” is**
2436 **reserved for the lifetime, covenant relationship between one man and one**
2437 **woman.**

2438 **However, no sin, including sexual immorality, renders a person incapable of**
2439 **receiving forgiveness. Rather, God promises that anyone who turns from their sin**
2440 **in repentance and places their trust in the atoning death and resurrection of**
2441 **Jesus Christ will receive forgiveness and redemption from sin, reconciliation with**
2442 **God, peace through a purified conscience, and hope for a new life.**

2443 **A19 – Rapture and The Great Tribulation**

2444 *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week*
2445 *He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be*

2446 *one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured*
2447 *out on the desolate. (Daniel 9:27)*

2448 *Therefore when you see the “abomination of desolation”, spoken of by Daniel the*
2449 *prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those*
2450 *who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to*
2451 *take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his*
2452 *clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in*
2453 *those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then*
2454 *there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world*
2455 *until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh*
2456 *would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. Then if anyone*
2457 *says to you, “Look, here is the Christ!” or “There!” do not believe it. For false christs and*
2458 *false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even*
2459 *the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, “Look, He is in*
2460 *the desert!” do not go out; or “Look, He is in the inner rooms!” do not believe it. For as*
2461 *the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the*
2462 *Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.*
2463 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon*
2464 *will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will*
2465 *be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the*
2466 *tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of*
2467 *heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a*
2468 *trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of*
2469 *heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:15-31)*

2470 *In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to*
2471 *prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and*
2472 *receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:2-3)*

2473 *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a*
2474 *moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and*
2475 *the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (I Corinthians 15:51-52)*

2476 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive*
2477 *the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (II*
2478 *Corinthians 5:10)*

2479 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord*
2480 *Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious*
2481 *body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*
2482 *(Philippians 3:20-21)*

2483 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an*
2484 *archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we*
2485 *who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet*
2486 *the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one*
2487 *another with these words. (I Thessalonians 4:16-18)*

2488 *Now brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering*
2489 *together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit*
2490 *or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one*

2491 *deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes*
2492 *first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts*
2493 *himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the*
2494 *temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was*
2495 *still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may*
2496 *be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He*
2497 *who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one*
2498 *will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy*
2499 *with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the*
2500 *working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous*
2501 *deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth,*
2502 *that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that*
2503 *they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the*
2504 *truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (II Thessalonians 2:1-12)*

2505 *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of*
2506 *themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents,*
2507 *unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal,*
2508 *despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of*
2509 *God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn*
2510 *away! (II Timothy 3:1-5)*

2511 *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of*
2512 *trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*
2513 *(Revelation 3:10)*

2514 *And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and*
2515 *as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent*
2516 *reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has*
2517 *come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in*
2518 *fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he*
2519 *said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the*
2520 *Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." (Revelation 19:6-9)*

2521 **We believe that the world is day by day ripening for judgment, and that the days**
2522 **prior to this time will be characterized by great apostasy and wickedness. The**
2523 **Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven preparing a place for His people. As**
2524 **promised, He will appear visibly in the clouds to translate His bride, the Church,**
2525 **from this earth into heaven. Between this event and His glorious return with His**
2526 **saints, He will reward each believer according to their works at His judgment seat**
2527 **and celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb with His bride, the Church. During**
2528 **this interval, the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an**
2529 **unbelieving world. This seven-year period, called the Great Tribulation, is the**
2530 **seventieth week prophesied by Daniel and will be a time of great suffering to**
2531 **purify Israel, to judge the unbelieving nations, and to try the hearts of men, and in**
2532 **which many will believe and be martyred.**

2533 **A20 – Second Coming of Christ and Establishment of Millennial Kingdom**

2534 *For the Lord will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her*
2535 *wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will*
2536 *be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody. (Isaiah 51:3)*

2537 *They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.*
2538 *They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the*
2539 *days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work*
2540 *of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they*
2541 *shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. It*
2542 *shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I*
2543 *will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox,*
2544 *and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy*
2545 *mountain," says the Lord. (Isaiah 65:21-25)*

2546 *He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give*
2547 *Him the throne of His father David. (Luke 1:32)*

2548 *Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the*
2549 *glorious liberty of the children of God. (Romans 8:21)*

2550 *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit*
2551 *and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the*
2552 *Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the*
2553 *bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the*
2554 *nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be*
2555 *released for a little while. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was*
2556 *committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their*
2557 *witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his*
2558 *image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they*
2559 *lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live*
2560 *again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and*
2561 *holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no*
2562 *power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a*
2563 *thousand years. Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released*
2564 *from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the*
2565 *earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand*
2566 *of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the*
2567 *saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured*
2568 *them. (Revelation 20:1-9)*

2569 **The Great Tribulation will be climaxed by the physical return of the Lord Jesus**
2570 **Christ to the earth, with power and great glory, to reclaim creation and establish**
2571 **His earthly kingdom. He will rule His kingdom for a thousand years. He will bind**
2572 **Satan and place him in the abyss, lift the curse which now rests upon all of**
2573 **creation, restore Israel to her own land and give her the realization of God's**
2574 **covenant promises, and bring the knowledge of God to the whole world. At the**
2575 **close of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed and will go out to deceive some**
2576 **of those born during the Millennium who will be destroyed by God with fire from**
2577 **heaven.**

2578 **A21 – Judgment and Eternity**

2579 *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment. (Hebrews 9:27)*

2580 *And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has*
2581 *reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. (Jude*
2582 *6)*

2583 *The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the*
2584 *beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and*
2585 *ever. Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth*
2586 *and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead,*
2587 *small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was*
2588 *opened which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works,*
2589 *by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it,*
2590 *and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged,*
2591 *each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire.*
2592 *This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into*
2593 *the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10-15)*

2594 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had*
2595 *passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New*
2596 *Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her*
2597 *husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God*
2598 *is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will*
2599 *be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there*
2600 *shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the*
2601 *former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:1-4)*

2602 **At the close of the Millennium all unbelievers will be raised from the dead and will**
2603 **appear before God’s throne to be judged according to their deeds. All who do not**
2604 **have their name in the Book of Life will be found guilty and will be punished by**
2605 **consciously spending eternity in the Lake of Fire in great suffering. Those whose**
2606 **names are found in the Book of Life will be rewarded by experiencing eternity in**
2607 **conscious blessedness in God’s presence. At this time the demons are judged by**
2608 **God, and Satan is thrown into the lake of fire for eternity. God will make a new**
2609 **heaven and a new earth, the old shall pass away, and time will lapse into eternity.**

2610 **A22 – Conclusion**

2611 *The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures*
2612 *forever. (Psalm 119:160)*

2613 *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy*
2614 *but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one*
2615 *tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one*
2616 *of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the*
2617 *kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the*
2618 *kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the*
2619 *righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of*
2620 *heaven.” (Matthew 5:17-20)*

2621 *For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone*
2622 *adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if*
2623 *anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away*
2624 *his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in*
2625 *this book. He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen.*
2626 *Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*
2627 *(Revelation 22:18-21)*

2628 **We believe that the Bible, and the doctrine contained therein, is a sacred trust to**
2629 **be preserved and taught in its purity, and that it teaches a life to be lived and the**
2630 **Gospel to be preached. Amen.**

2631

2632 **APPENDIX B – BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF LOCAL CHURCH GOVERNANCE**

2633 *The following are summaries of key Biblical principles that were used to develop the*
2634 *governance structure in this Constitution.*

2635 **B1** – Christ is the Head of the Church, and spiritually all his disciples are on a level ground
2636 before Him, each having direct access to Him and responsibility to intercede for the good of all
2637 as a community of priests (Ephesians 4:15; Matthew 23:8-11; I Timothy 2:5; Revelation 1:6;
2638 Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 3:13).

2639 **B2** – A believer’s loyalty is to the Bible. Peter makes it clear in Acts 2:22-39 that the people
2640 were held responsible for not standing against their leader’s decision to crucify Jesus Christ.

2641 **B3** – Not inconsistent with this equality, God has ordained the existence of officers in the
2642 church, some of whom are charged under Christ with the leadership of the church (I Timothy
2643 5:17; I Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:7,13:17; Acts 20:28).

2644 **B4** – Under the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word, the final court of appeal in the local
2645 church in deciding matters of disagreement is the congregation itself. This is implied, first, in the
2646 fact that the leaders are not to lead by coercion, but by persuasion and free consent [I Peter
2647 5:3]; second, in the fact that elders may be censured [I Timothy 5:19]; and third, in the fact that
2648 in Matthew 18:15-20, the church is the final court of appeal in matters of discipline.

2649 **B5** – Therefore, the local congregation should call and approve its own leaders.

2650 **B6** – Spiritual qualifications should never be sacrificed to technical expertise. For example, the
2651 Deacon of Stewardship should be a man or a woman with a heart for God even more
2652 importantly than they have a head for finance, and best of all, both.

2653 **B7** – The selection process should provide for the necessary assessment of possible leaders by
2654 a group (such as an Elections Committee) able to discern their qualifications from the Bible and
2655 that the process should provide for the final approval by the congregation (I Timothy 3:1-7, I
2656 Timothy 3:8-13, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-4).

2657 **B8** – These leaders are gifted by God for ministry, recognized and confirmed by the
2658 congregation, and are responsible under God to the congregation. The congregation affirms
2659 God's call and gifts in a person's life and commissions that person into the role of Biblical
2660 leadership. They also voluntarily support and are persuaded by those leaders as these leaders
2661 show the congregation what to do from the Bible and by personal example (Hebrews 13:7-17).

2662 **B9** – There do not appear to be explicit rules in the New Testament regarding which decisions
2663 the whole congregation shall vote on as a body. This would therefore be worked out in a
2664 congregationally approved agreement (such as this constitution and bylaws) reflecting the need
2665 for free and efficient leadership on the one hand and accountability to the congregation on the
2666 other.

2667 **B10** – The leaders of the church need to be people who are spiritually mature, exemplary, and
2668 gifted for the ministry given to them. (I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Romans 12:6-8; Acts 20:28;
2669 Philippians 2:2).

2670 **B11** – The New Testament assumes the existence of two offices for the ongoing life of the
2671 church: Elders and Deacons (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-13). Elders and Deacons should
2672 follow the Lord’s example: "... the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one
2673 who rules like the one who serves." (Luke 22:26b).

2674 **A.** The **Elders** are the doctrinal guardians of the flock, oversee the life of the church and
2675 are responsible to God for the feeding and care and ministry of the people from the Bible
2676 and through prayer. In the body of Christ there is an emphasis on the equality of believers,
2677 making it somewhat different from the home and government. In Hebrews 13:17, believers
2678 are commanded to obey their leaders. The word used is *peith* which has the usual meaning
2679 of "convince" or "persuade." The "obedience" suggested is not by submission to authority,
2680 but resulting from persuasion. *Peith* and *pisteu*, "to trust," are closely related
2681 etymologically; the difference in meaning is that the former implies the obedience that is
2682 produced by the latter. The emphasis here is on an obedience that comes from being
2683 persuaded that something is true. In this case, it would be the truth of the Bible that is in
2684 view. Here they are being called upon to persuade the people that follow them with the
2685 truth of the Bible. This would reinforce the necessity of leaders to be men who can handle
2686 the Bible with skill and effectiveness. It must be remembered that the office of elder does
2687 not come endowed with wisdom from God. Upon entering the office of elder, a man is
2688 given authority but not the wisdom to use that authority in a God-honoring manner. That is
2689 why elders are required to be "apt to teach" as one of their key qualifications (I Timothy 3:2;
2690 Titus 1:9-10). On the other hand, the congregation should be persuadable and not stiff-
2691 necked (Hebrews 13:7-17).

2692 With regard to the time-honored office of "pastor," the New Testament only refers to the
2693 office by this name one time (Ephesians 4:11). The term appears to be a functional
2694 description of the role of "elder," stressing the care and feeding of the church as God's
2695 flock, just as "bishop" or "overseer" is a functional description of the role of elder, stressing
2696 the governing or oversight of the church. This would imply that what we usually call "the
2697 pastor" of the church is properly one of several elders. Together they are charged with the
2698 teaching and oversight of the church. Within the Church Council, differing roles will be
2699 performed so that very likely one will be the "preaching/teaching elder" while not excluding
2700 others from that responsibility.

2701 **B.** The **Deacons** relieve the elders of distractions and pressures that would divert them
2702 from the ministry of the Word and prayer and the general oversight of the church (Acts 6:1-
2703 7). Thus it appears that deacons would care for the building and grounds; supply the
2704 communion and baptismal needs, as well as all other food and fellowship materials;
2705 administer a fund for the manifold material needs of the people and be ready to step in
2706 during crises of all kinds; handle the greeting and welcoming ministries; and provide
2707 practical assistance in areas such as job-hunting, housing matters, legal-aid, childcare, etc.
2708 In general, they would be ready to assist the elders of the church in any "service" that
2709 would support and promote the ministry of the Bible. In other words, elders without
2710 deacons cause elders to leave the ministry of the Bible and prayer, and begin acting like
2711 deacons. Similarly, placing elders over deacons institutes a layer of hierarchy and causes
2712 elders to have to spend time becoming familiar with diaconate matters, time that is not
2713 spent on the ministry of the Bible and prayer. Since they have the same qualifications as
2714 elders, except for the ability to teach, the focus of deacons upon administrative and
2715 operational matters complement the focus of the elders in the ministry of the Bible and
2716 prayer in our church.

2717 **B12** – Bethany Baptist Church is congregational in its governance, because all who have placed
2718 their faith in Jesus Christ have equal standing before God. Our governance reflects that we
2719 individually are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and therefore are all under the authority and leadership
2720 of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. Each believer's loyalty is to God as revealed in His
2721 Word. The church membership elects leaders known as the Church Council, which is comprised
2722 of elders and deacons, who will lead the congregation by using their God-given gifts. While we

2723 depend on the spiritual maturity of our Church Council, we recognize that the Holy Spirit has
2724 gifted all believers within the congregation (Acts 15:1-33).

2725 **B13** – The church membership delegates and entrusts responsibility for preserving the spiritual
2726 integrity and doctrine (elders) as well as day-to-day operations (deacons) within the church to
2727 the thirteen (13) members of the Church Council. In general, the deacons will defer to the elders
2728 in spiritual and doctrinal matters while the elders will defer to the deacons in administrative and
2729 operational matters. While the Church Council has been entrusted with these duties, they are
2730 accountable to the church membership and will provide status reports and updates at the
2731 quarterly business meetings. These meetings are opportunities for the church membership to
2732 ask questions and provide input and affirm the direction of the Church Council. In the rare event
2733 that there is a dispute, the church membership can, with prayer and the leading of the Holy
2734 Spirit, redirect the Church Council.

2735 **B14** – We believe women can serve as deacons in the church. One of the main proof texts for
2736 determining whether women can serve as deacons is I Timothy 3:8-12, “Likewise deacons must
2737 be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the
2738 mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve
2739 as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers,
2740 temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children
2741 and their own houses well.” The statement that deacons are to meet the qualification to “be the
2742 husbands of one wife” (I Timothy 3:12) would seem to disqualify women from serving as
2743 deacons. However, the Greek word *gunaikas* in I Timothy 3:11 can be translated “women” or
2744 “wives”, thus alternately rendering verse 11 as, “Likewise women must be reverent...”. Here
2745 Paul likely refers not to deacons’ wives, but to the women who serve as deacons. The use of
2746 the word “likewise” as an introduction in verse 11 suggests a third group of leaders in addition to
2747 elders and male deacons. Furthermore, Paul gave no requirements for elders’ wives when
2748 outlining the qualifications for eldership. Why would he then list qualifications for deacons’
2749 wives? If it were important for the wives of leaders to behave in a certain way, it is logical to
2750 assume he would be more, or at least equally, concerned for the elders’ wives since elders are
2751 in a more prominent position in the church. But he makes no such demands on elders’ wives.

2752 Another verse frequently used to support the office of deaconess is Romans 16:1, “I commend
2753 to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea”. Paul refers to Phoebe
2754 with the same word *diakonon* that he uses in I Timothy 3:12. This word can be translated
2755 “servant” or transliterated “deacon”. It is unclear whether Paul is saying that Phoebe holds the
2756 office of deaconess or is a deacon-like servant. In the early church, women servants cared for
2757 sick believers, the poor, strangers, and those in prison. They instructed women and children
2758 (Titus 2:3-5). While we do not know if Phoebe had the official title of “deacon”, Paul did think
2759 enough of her to entrust her with the tremendous responsibility of delivering the epistle to the
2760 Romans to the church in Rome (Romans 16:1-2). The relative silence in Scripture about
2761 deaconesses does not necessarily disqualify women from serving as deacon. Therefore,
2762 because Scripture does not speak against it but perhaps may even endorse it, we allow women
2763 to serve as deacons.

2764 **B15** – The concern has been expressed that should women be elected to all eight (8) deacon
2765 positions, they could control the direction of the Church Council. The same potential for women
2766 to be in control also exists at the congregational level which is the final court of appeal in this
2767 local church. At the initial adoption of this constitution (September 2007), women comprised
2768 55% and men comprised 45% of the active voting members. Therefore, at the congregational
2769 level, there exists the same potential for the women of the church to redirect the Church
2770 Council, even if it were comprised entirely of men. While the deacons (male and/or female)

2771 could control the direction of the Church Council, they are expected to defer to the elders in
2772 spiritual and doctrinal matters and function within the Biblical boundaries for a deacon.

2773 **B16** – This governance structure allows the Church Council to lead efficiently and in a timely
2774 manner. They are able to make decisions on behalf of the church while giving the church
2775 membership general oversight responsibility for the direction of the church.

2776 **B17** – A believer’s primary loyalty is to the Bible (Acts 17:11), and their responsibility is to verify
2777 that the teaching they receive is Biblical. The elders and deacons are not to say “Do it because I
2778 say so”, but rather “Do what I show you from the Bible.”

2779

2780 **APPENDIX C – ORDINATION OF PASTORS**

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2786

2787 **APPENDIX D – BIBLIOGRAPHY USED TO PREPARE THIS CONSTITUTION**

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