

# **BY LAWS**

**of**

**FIRST BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.  
9171 CENTRAL AVENUE - SUITE 300  
CAPITOL HEIGHTS, MD 20743**

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of the "FIRST BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.," in order to function more efficiently and effectively, do ordain and establish these Bylaws for First Bethel Baptist Church, Inc.

Placing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, believing in the teachings and principles of the Holy Scriptures adhered to by the Baptist Faith and in those great distinguishing principles for which they have always stood, namely:

1. The pre-eminence of Christ as our Divine Lord and Savior;
2. The supreme authority of The Holy Scriptures (The Bible) and its sufficiency as our only rule of faith and practice;
3. The right of private interpretations and the competency of the individual soul in direct approach of God;
4. The separation of Church and State;
5. The regenerated church membership;
6. The essential ordinance of believers in obedience to the commands of Christ;
7. The complete independence of the local church and its interdependence in associated fellowship with other Baptist Churches;
8. The solemn obligation of majority rule, guaranteeing equal rights to all and special privileges to none;
9. The spiritual unity of all believers, for which the Master so earnestly prayed; and
10. A world-wide program of missionary fervor and evangelism in obedience to the final command of Christ.

We, therefore, unite ourselves together as a body of baptized (by immersion) believers in Christ Jesus and adopt for our government, plan of worship and service the following:

**ARTICLE I  
NAME**

The name of this corporation shall be First Bethel Baptist Church, Inc., a non-profit corporation.

**ARTICLE II  
PURPOSE**

The purpose or purposes which the Church will hereafter pursue are for religious, charitable, health care, educational, scientific and other similar non-profit purposes, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations which qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provisions of any future federal tax law).

**ARTICLE III  
POLITY: The Form of Government**

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are among Baptist Churches.

The title of the property of the Church shall be vested in the corporation, duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Maryland respecting Religious Corporations. The said corporation shall consist of at least three members, all of whom shall be members of this Church, elected by this Church, and shall hold and manage the estate, property, interest and inheritance of this Church in accordance with the laws of the State of Maryland. The name of the said corporation is First Bethel Baptist Church, Inc.

**ARTICLE IV  
CHRISTIAN COVENANT**

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

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

WE ALSO ENGAGE, to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drink as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

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

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

And now unto Him, who brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, be Power and Glory forever. Amen.

## **ARTICLE V DOCTRINE: ARTICLES OF FAITH**

### **Section 1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES**

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which GOD will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

### **Section 2. THE TRUE GOD**

We believe Scripture teaches that there is one, and only one, living and true GOD, an infinite intelligent Spirit, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

### **Section 3. THE FALL OF MAN**

We believe Scripture teaches that Man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the Law of GOD, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

#### **Section 4. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE**

We believe Scripture teaches that election is the eternal purpose of GOD, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of GOD's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in GOD, and active imitation of His free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the higher degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

#### **Section 5. THE WAY OF SALVATION**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of GOD; who according to the will of the Father, assumed our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

#### **Section 6. OF REGENERATION**

We believe Scripture teaches that regeneration, or the new birth, is that change wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, by which a new nature and a spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus; a holy disposition is given to the mind, the will subdued, the dominion of sin broken, and the affections changed from a love of sin and self, to a love of holiness and GOD; the change is instantaneous, effected solely by the power of GOD, in a manner incomprehensible to reason; the evidence of it is found in a changed disposition of mind, the fruits of righteousness, and a newness of life. And without it salvation is impossible.

#### **Section 7. OF REPENTANCE**

We believe Scripture teaches that repentance is a personal act, prompted by the Spirit; and consists in a godly sorrow for sin, as offensive to GOD and ruinous to the soul; that it is accompanied with great humiliation in view of one's sin and guilt, together with prayer for pardon; also by sincere hatred of sin, and a persistent turning away from, and abandonment of all that is evil and unholy. Since none are sinless in this life, repentance needs to be often repeated.

#### **Section 8. OF FAITH**

We believe Scripture teaches that faith, as an evangelical grace wrought by the Spirit, is the medium through which Christ is received by the soul as its sacrifice and Savior. It is an assent of the mind and a consent of the heart, consisting mainly of belief and trust; the testimony of GOD is implicitly accepted and believed as true, while Christ is unreservedly trusted for salvation; and by it the believer is brought into vital relations with GOD, freely justified, and lives as seeing Him who is invisible. Faith cannot save, but it reveals Christ to the soul as a willing and sufficient Savior, and commits the heart and life to Him.

### **Section 9. OF JUSTIFICATION**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with GOD, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

### **Section 10. OF ADOPTION**

We believe Scripture teaches that adoption is a gracious act, by which the Father, for the sake of Christ, accepts believers to the estate and condition of children, by new and spiritual birth; sending the Spirit of adoption into their hearts, whereby they become members of the family of GOD, and entitled to all the rights, privileges and promises of children; and if children, then heirs, heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, to the heritage of the saints on earth, and an inheritance reserved in heaven for them.

### **Section 11. OF SANCTIFICATION**

We believe the Scriptures teach that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of GOD, we are made partakers of His Holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means-especially the Word of GOD, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer; and in the practice of all godly exercises and duties.

### **Section 12. THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS**

We believe the Scriptures teach that such as are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will not utterly fall away and finally perish, but will endure to the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation.

### **Section 13. THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Law of GOD is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their sinful nature; to deliver them from which, and restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the Means of Grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church.

### **Section 14. A GOSPEL CHURCH**

We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by the covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the

ordinances of Christ; governed by His Laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its only scriptural officers are bishops or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

#### **Section 15. CHRISTIAN BAPTISM**

We believe Scripture teaches that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ, into the Name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation, and to the Lord's Supper.

#### **Section 16. THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Lord's Supper is a provision of bread and wine, as symbols of Christ's body and blood, partaken of by the members of the Church, in commemoration of the suffering and death of their Lord; showing their faith and participation in the merits of His sacrifice, and their hope of eternal life through His resurrection from the dead; its observance to be preceded by faithful self-examination.

#### **Section 17. THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor, except works of mercy and necessity, by the devout observance of all the means to grace, both private and public; and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of GOD.

#### **Section 18. CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth; but that civil rulers have no rights of control over, or of interference with, religious matters.

#### **Section 19. RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED**

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our GOD, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in this life and after death.

#### **Section 20. THE WORLD TO COME**

We believe the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the Last Day, Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

**Section 21. EDUCATION**

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is coordinated with the causes of mission and general benevolence and should receive along with these the liberal support of the Church. An adequate system of Christian schools is also necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

**Section 22. STEWARDSHIP**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, temple, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

**Section 23. COOPERATION**

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such organizations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the Church. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament Churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

**Section 24. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SOCIAL ORDER**

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his/her own life and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Christian should oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of principles of righteousness, truth and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

**Section 25. PEACE AND WAR**

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ, they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all of the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love.

### **Section 26. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left us free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every Church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom, no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free Church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

### **Section 27. SCRIPTURAL POSITION ON MARRIAGE**

First Bethel Baptist Church, as a body of believing Christians offer our voices in affirmation of the Creator capacity of Almighty God. As such, we hold that the bond of marriage was emphatically set forth by God when He created Adam (Gen. 2:7), and then Eve (Gen. 2: 22), according to the biblical account recorded in Genesis. The scriptures recount that He (God) created them (Adam and Eve), male and female. (Gen. 1:27) The most far-reaching implication is that God made them (Adam and Eve) male and female for a specific purpose. In the wisdom of His providence and eternal purposes, He created them with opposite natures in order to compliment and complete each other. (Gen. 2:18) It can be further deduced that He wanted them to enjoy the pleasure of knowing one another in the context of the marital bond. (Gen.2:25) Moreover, He also designed them for the purpose of procreation (reproducing their kind) (Gen. 1:28). Likewise, He intended that the marriage bond and relationship should supersede all other earthly bonds including mother and father. (Gen. 2:24) We therefore believe in the dignity and purpose of marriage as designed by God. As the professing Church, we find God's design and purpose to be immutable. Therefore, we hold that any form of union between individuals outside of the articulated plan and purpose of God for one man and one woman to be joined as husband and wife in the state of matrimony is an abrogation of the created order of human nature as intended by God from the beginning. We find absolutely no support whatsoever in scripture for the gay, bisexual, homosexual, lesbian, transsexual, transgender, or any other so-called "alternative" lifestyle. We must therefore firmly oppose any agenda or objective, which seeks to uphold or justify such immoral acts against the purpose of God, as acceptable.

While we steadfastly support the dignity of all human beings and insist upon treating them with kindness and compassion, we must respectfully disavow and disagree with any attempt to sanction behavior, which God finds sinful and repugnant. We believe persons who are engaged in behavior of the type enumerated above are nonetheless "souls" for whom Christ died, and should in no way be mistreated, hated, abused, or rejected as candidates for the grace of God. (I Cor. 6:9-11)

Consistent with these stated principles; no officer, agent, minister, or member of First Bethel Baptist Church, Inc., or its departments, divisions, units or sub-units may perform a ceremony or sanction a union, whether civil or religious, formal or informal, in the name of First Bethel Baptist Church, Inc., while affiliated with or holding membership and/or credentials in this body. Moreover, no one may offer a statement or venture an opinion on this subject matter as if to offer the official position of this body, except the Pastor of First Bethel Baptist Church, Inc., or his designee, or his official representative. Persons who violate the spirit or letter of this prohibition are subject to the highest level of discipline, up to and including expulsion and excommunication from First Bethel Baptist Church, Inc.

## **ARTICLE VI AMENDMENTS**

These By Laws may be amended, or repealed by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present at any regular business meeting of the Church; provided, however, that such amendment, alteration, or repeal be given to the Church Clerk in writing; and the proposed change(s) be presented to the Church at least thirty (30) days prior to the time the vote is taken.

**BY LAWS**  
**ARTICLE I**  
**MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1. General**

This is a sovereign missionary Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of government in all phases of the temporal life of this Church.

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

Members are expected, first of all, to be faithful in all the duties essential to the Christian life, and also to attend regularly the services of this Church; to give regularly for its support and its causes; first through tithes, and second, through offerings; and to also share in its organized work.

**Section 2. Candidacy**

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this Church by:

- (a) Profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of the Church.
- (b) Pending letter from another Church of like faith and order.
- (c) Restoration or experience of grace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

All such candidates shall be taken into this Church upon proper recommendation and approval of the members present at any regular worship service. All must abide by the Church Covenant, Bylaws and Church Program in letter and in spirit.

**Section 3. Reception of New Members**

New members must attend and complete the New Members Orientation Classes prior to receiving the "Right Hand of Fellowship."

The "Right Hand of Fellowship" shall be extended to new members during observance of the Lord's Supper each month as an act of welcome and entrance into full membership of the Church.

**Section 4. Qualification of Voters**

This Church has adopted tithes and offerings as its standard of giving. Any member who is at least three months in arrears will not be eligible to vote on Church affairs. All members, eighteen years and older, who are in good standing, are entitled to vote. At Church meetings, each

member, 18 years and older, who has consistently contributed to the support of the Church, is entitled to exercise their right to vote. Members who are unable to fulfill these obligations must notify the Pastor (in writing) that they are unable to contribute financially because of stated hardship and request exemption from this requirement.

A list of members entitled to vote will be prepared by the Clerical Administration. No proxy votes will be recognized.

Any member of First Bethel Baptist Church who has been absent from Church activities for a period of six (6) months or more without a reasonable excuse (i.e., extended illness, employment, etc.) will be notified in writing and/or by telephone that they are being placed on the inactive membership rolls. If the member has not responded within six (6) months from the date they are placed on the inactive roll, the member's name will be removed from the rolls.

### **Section 5. Termination of Membership**

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (a) Upon notification (written or orally) that the member has transferred to another church.
- (b) Affiliation with a Church of a different faith or denomination (i.e. Catholic, Muslim, etc.).
- (c) Disciplinary action of First Bethel Baptist Church, Inc. (Membership may be terminated by a majority vote of the membership present, after due notice to the member, and a hearing by Church officers if the member becomes offensive towards the Pastor, Church officers and/or members, or their actions are deemed to be immoral or their conduct is viewed as unchristian.)
- (d) Death

## **ARTICLE II** **THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY**

### **Section 1. General**

The Christian Ministry is composed of representatives from each ministry in First Bethel Baptist Church, Inc. "Go ye, therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20)

### **Section 2. The Licensing of Ministers**

- (a) It is the custom of First Bethel Baptist Church, to grant a license to men believing themselves to have been called to preach the gospel, but not yet prepared to enter upon the work of the ministry. This is simply an approval by the Church.

- (b) This license confers no rights and imparts no authority; but expresses the conviction that the bearer possesses gifts and capabilities which indicate a call to the ministry, and a promise of usefulness in it.
- (c) Where there is good indication of a call, the Church should be ready to encourage the candidate in his chosen course, by offering them support, if possible.
- (d) Persons who have been licensed and recognized by First Bethel Baptist Church may have their license revoked or withdrawn due to behavior, conduct, morals or character traits that place the gospel of God, the Church, or its ministry in a negative light. The Pastor may unilaterally make this determination within the wisdom of his counsel.

### **Section 3. The Ordination of Ministers**

- (a) Before the Church calls for the ordination, the candidate must be a member in good standing.
- (b) Invitations/letters are sent to other Churches and individuals requesting them to send their Pastor and other brethren (usually two) to consider and advise the church as to the propriety of setting apart the candidate for the work of the gospel ministry.
- (c) When the council is satisfied with the examination, the candidate is allowed to retire while the body proceeds to discuss the matter, and to take action. If the council is satisfied as to the readiness of the candidate, it shall issue this report: "Resolved: That being satisfied with the results of our examination, we approve the setting apart of the candidate and recommend that the Church proceed to the public service of ordination."

## **ARTICLE III THE PASTORAL OFFICE**

### **Section 1. Nature of the Pastor's Work**

- (a) The religious cultivation of the Church and congregation constitutes the particular work of the Pastor. He is the Shepherd of the flock. The Pastor is to show care and concern for their temporal interests, but their spiritual welfare is his special charge.
- (b) The Pastor has oversight, responsibility, and supervises all the interests of the Church, and all the officers, ministries, and departments, both spiritual and temporal. It is his privilege and his duty to hold a watchful eye over all the work of the Church, so that the purpose of Christ may be served in every way possible.
- (c) The Pastor must be concerned for the religious nurturing of children and youth, but not to the neglect or exclusion of others. Adult education and the care of the elderly are also important parts of his responsibility. He is equally the Shepherd of all his flock.

## **Section 2. Selection of a Pastor**

- (a) The Pastor will be selected under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and by election through the free choice of the majority members present during the Church process.
- (b) A pulpit committee of seven (7) members will be appointed by the Church as its representatives to examine credentials, conduct interviews and review the preaching, teaching, and leadership skills of the candidates whose names have been suggested for the pastorate. (The congregation has the authority to suspend 2(b) if they vote to select a Minister on the First Bethel Baptist Church Ministerial Staff)
- (c) When satisfied that God has led them to the candidate of His choosing for the position, the committee shall arrange for a suitable occasion for presenting the chosen candidate to the Church, when he will preach at a regular service and officially meet the members of the First Bethel Baptist Church congregation.
- (d) Shortly thereafter, the Church will schedule a business meeting, and register its vote with regard to the candidate.
- (e) When the choice is made and the Pastor is secured, then let the Pastor be received, loved, supported, honored and obeyed, as the one sent from God for this sacred work.

## **Section 3. The Pastor's Authority**

- (a) The Pastor is placed over the Church by the appointment of God and the free and voluntary act of the Church itself.
- (b) As Chief Administrator, the Pastor has the authority to purchase items for the Church at his discretion in order to improve conditions of the Church, or to enhance the ministry of the congregation.
- (c) As a preacher of the gospel, his authority is of another and higher kind, in that he is an Ambassador from the King, and speaks with an authority that is more than human.
- (d) The Pastor has the authority to appoint chairpersons to any leadership position in the Church, including the deacons and trustees ministries.

## **Section 4. Pastoral Support**

- (a) The Pastor must be generously supported in terms of salary and other expenses, according to the ability of the Church.
- (b) The Pastor shall be given annual salary increases, with the cost of living indices used as guidelines.
- (c) The Church will pay for a major medical plan for the Pastor. The medical plan will include provisions for prescriptions, dental and vision services.

- (d) Upon the Pastor's death, the Church will pay the equivalent of the Pastor's salary for one year to the Pastor's spouse or beneficiary.
- (e) The Church will pay for courses that the Pastor elects to take for enrichment or advancement, including pursuing an advanced degree.
- (f) The Pastor's support package will include a life Insurance policy with a value of at least \$100,000 and a retirement policy or annuity with monthly contributions of least 20 % of the Pastor's base salary. The Pastor shall also be provided with at least a one month's paid vacation annually.

#### **ARTICLE IV** **OFFICERS**

All Church Officers (except the Pastor) are to be elected annually. Candidates for Church offices must be active members in the Church for at least six (6) consecutive months prior to offering themselves as a candidate. The officers of this Church are as follows:

##### **Section 1. Pastor**

The Pastor is responsible for leading the Church and its ministry as a New Testament Church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the ministries, deacons, deaconess, trustees, Christian education ministry, mission ministry and the Church staff in performing their tasks. A major responsibility of the Pastor is to perform his various pastoral duties. The Pastor is the chief administrator, leader of corporate worship, and the priestly and prophetic functions of the ministry, and the education and evangelical aspects of the church's witness and overall vision.

The Pastor (or his designee) shall serve as the Church Moderator, and shall preside over the Church business meetings. The Pastor is an ex-officio member of all ministries and organizations of the church. The Pastor shall approve of all visiting ministers (including First Bethel Baptist Church members) and others who desire to share the pulpit to preach or speak for any First Bethel Baptist Church ministry or program.

##### **Section 2. Assistant to the Pastor**

The Assistant to the Pastor serves at the pleasure of the Pastor in his absence, and as otherwise directed. In the absence of the Pastor, he will perform, or be responsible for directing another staff minister or administrator to perform all sacerdotal functions of the Church including, but not limited to visitation of sick and shut-ins, baptism, weddings, funerals, The Lord's Supper, spiritual counseling, infant dedications, teaching, administration of Church affairs, and the regular conducting of the stated worship services of the Church. These functions shall be performed in accordance with biblical principles, Baptist doctrine, and with the knowledge and direction of the Pastor.

The Assistant to the Pastor reports directly to the Pastor. In the absence of the Pastor, the Assistant to the Pastor will have supervisory authority and oversight over all Church staff and personnel.

The key duty of this office is to maintain a close working relationship with the Minister of In-Reach and Discipleship, Out-Reach and Youth, Administrator and Controller, to ensure that the Church is operated with full professional and spiritual efficiency, and conducting meetings as scheduled. Information shared during staff meetings will be recorded and a comprehensive report will be forwarded to the attention of the Pastor on a weekly basis.

#### **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR ASSISTANT PASTOR:**

1. Attendance must be reliable and the number of absences should not exceed the amount permitted. Has no unexcused absences from the job and is available to work during non-business hours when the need arises.
2. Weekly reports are completed in a timely and professional manner
3. Maintains a wholesome and productive relationship with the Church membership, as well as the ministerial staff.
4. Ability to perceive problems and possibilities, and communicate effectively with the Pastor for the growth, development and advancement of the Church and its purposes.
5. At no time will the Assistant to the Pastor consult, counsel, or institute any changes without first consulting with the Pastor and obtaining his permission.
6. Perform other duties as assigned by the Pastor.
7. Will be recommended and appointed by the Pastor only.
8. The Assistant to the Pastor is responsible only to the Pastor and will be hired and terminated by the Pastor.

#### **Section 4. Deacons**

- (a) Deacons are men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, to whom this service should be committed, that they themselves might give of themselves "continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."
- (b) Deacons shall meet the qualifications for their office as set forth in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8 -13. Deacons are to be faithful, prudent, experienced and devout members. Deacons must maintain a close fellowship with the Pastor.
- (c) Deacons are to participate voluntarily in training courses, seminars and classes on a continuous basis in order to find better ways in which to serve both the Church and the community.
- (d) Deacons are to realize the full extent of their responsibility and receive training for these and other greater tasks, commit their lives to God, and assume all of the obligations of the office.
- (e) At no time are deacons to exercise authority over the Pastor. Deacons are to be the Pastor's helpers and support the vision God has given the Pastor for the body.
- (f) Deacons are not permitted to call independent meetings or assemblies of the congregation without the express permission of the Pastor. Any deacon or other officer who violates

this provision may be summarily removed from office by the Pastor.

### **Section 5. Selection of Deacons**

- (a) The deacons shall consist of a minimum of seven (7) members.
- (b) The Pastor shall recommend candidates for the office of deacon to the Church.
- (c) Deacons are to be chosen by a free vote of the Church at a regular business meeting by secret ballot.
- (d) Deacons are to be tithers and leaders in stewardship, meaning "time, talent, temple, and treasure."
- (e) Deacons are to be elected, and may serve for a period of three (3) years. After serving a term of three years, they may be eligible for reelection. There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to this Church from another Church where he has served as a deacon.

### **Section 6. Duties of the Deacon**

- (a) In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the Church.
- (b) The task of the deacons are to serve with the Pastor in performing designated duties within the Church's ministry; giving witness to the gospel to believers and unbelievers; care for the Church membership and other persons in the community; lead the Church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, stewardship and application; and to assist the Church in performing other tasks as needed.
- (c) The deacons shall meet with the Pastor at least once each month.

### **Section 7. Deaconess**

The deaconesses of First Bethel Baptist Church were organized under the leadership of Dr. Lehman Bates, Pastor, in 2013. The deaconesses are appointed to their work by the Pastor of the Church. Women are identified from within the congregation who are spiritually born again, consecrated, chaste, committed, virtuous, prudent, and sound in the doctrine of the Word of God.

#### **Qualifications:**

- (a) Salvation and new birth through Jesus Christ (John 3:1-7 and Romans 6).
- (b) Sound in Scriptural doctrines, i.e., faith, hope, love (Hebrews 11, I Peter 3:15; and I John 4:7-21).
- (c) Prayerful-full of prayer (Luke 18:1; Mark 9:14-29; and Daniel 6:10).
- (d) Tither (Malachi 3:7-10 and Matthew 23:23).
- (e) Attend seminars and workshops in preparation for and in conjunction with duties (I Timothy 4:13, 16; II Timothy 2:15; and II Peter 1:5-9).

- (f) “Even as the deaconess is grave, not slanderers, sober-minded, faithful in all things.” (I Timothy 3:11).
- (g) Demonstration of dutifulness as a church member in attendance, attitude and actions, with reference to worship services, missions, evangelism, Christian education and benevolence.
- (h) The deaconess does not have to be the wife of a deacon. She performs duties related to, but not limited to, worship, baptism, and visitation of the sick.

**Duties:**

- (a) Preparation of the Lord’s Supper and spreading of The Lord’s Table ( bread & wine; white linens; white gloves for use in preparing the Lord’s Supper).
- (b) Altar and Chancel area attendants—weekly polishing, dusting or cleaning of sacred articles of the Altar/Chancel area. Two (2) deaconesses are assigned to this task each week.
- (c) Assist with preparation of female candidates for baptism.
- (d) Provide an adequate supply of baptismal vestments and towels for men, women, boys and girls in cooperation with the chairman of the deacons ministry.
- (e) Pray a brief prayer with all female baptismal candidates prior to their meeting with the Pastor for his final instructions.
- (f) Maintain in a clean, sacred and secure manner, all articles used on the Altar and Chancel, in baptism and for the Lord’s Supper.
- (g) Avail themselves of special sick and/or shut-in visitation under the direction of the chairlady of the deaconess at the request of the Pastor. This type of visitation is usually carried out by at least two (2) deaconesses.
- (h) Participate in leading devotion during worship on each fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) Sunday of the year.
- (i) Perform other related duties as necessary or assigned.

**Section 8. Church Clerk**

- (a) The church clerk is responsible for keeping a complete and accurate record of Church business meetings, writing official letters on behalf of the Church, and maintaining the membership roll in good order.

- (b) The church clerk shall keep a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. All information should be kept up-to-date and readily available when needed.
- (c) The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted on by the Church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these By Laws. The Church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary.
- (d) All records of the Church are Church property and should be filed in the Church Office.
- (e) The Clerk is elected annually.
- (f) The Clerk must be available during worship service to answer the phone and keep up-to-date information readily available on each Sunday.

### **Section 9. Administrative Clerks**

- (a) The Administrative Clerks will post all financial contributions given by each member if the envelope number is used.
- (b) The Clerks will identify the payments as they are received each week through numbered offering envelopes, and record them in the record book or by the computer.
- (c) At regular intervals, perhaps once a quarter, the Clerk sends each contributor a written notice as to the status of dues, tithes, pledges, or offerings.
- (d) An accurate statement of one's giving record will be sent at the end of the calendar year in order to acknowledge contributions or to aid the contributor in computing his/her tax filings.

### **Section 10. Trustees**

- (a) Trustees shall be members of this Church in good standing, regular in their attendance, committed to tithing, able to be bonded, and may be subject to a background investigation.
- (b) The word "**Trust**" is the key word. The Church puts its confidence in this group of members and gives them the duty of caring for the Church's material possessions.
- (c) Trustees should be Christians who have business and/or legal experience. They are responsible for the Church's financial affairs in conjunction with the Pastor.
- (d) Trustees work with the Pastor and deacons as co-managers of all internal aspects of the Church related to finances and physical property.
- (e) Trustees are part of the management team, and work under the leadership and direction of the Pastor, who is the Chief Executive Officer.

### **Section 11. Selection of Trustees**

- (a) Candidates for the trustee ministry shall be recommended to the Church by the Pastor.

- (b) Trustees are to be elected by a free vote of the Church at a regular business meeting by secret ballot.
- (c) The trustee ministry shall consist of a minimum of three (3) members.
- (d) A trustee shall be elected, and may serve for a period of three (3) years. After serving for three years, he/she may be eligible for reelection.

## **Section 12. Duties of the Trustees**

- (a) Under the guidance of the Pastor, trustees will oversee the temporal affairs of the Church.
- (b) They are responsible for the protection, management and upkeep of the Church properties and/or parsonage, and hold in trust all properties and material possessions of the Church.
- (c) They are responsible for the development of an annual every-member financial canvass.
- (d) They are responsible for consulting with the Pastor and keeping a two-way communication process open with the heads of each ministry.
- (e) Trustees will sign all documents on behalf of the Church with the consent of the Pastor, regarding remodeling, purchasing, expanding and/or making loans. They are to ascertain that all legal technicalities are properly considered.
- (f) They are responsible for the management and use of the building and other church properties. They are to ensure that the building is ready for use by members, groups, organizations, and non-members for private use, by requiring that the custodians, security personnel, and members of the trustee ministry are on hand to open and close doors, and set-up the facility as needed.
- (g) They are to establish a timetable and checklist for properly determining the needs of the Church, and for its care and maintenance.
- (h) They are responsible for being present at each church service, at home or away, and shall be accountable for all church monies and property. They shall receive and count all monies from all persons and ministries, including offerings from special projects and all special programs and annual projects. Gifts and donations to the Pastor and Co-Pastor shall not be counted against their stipend and/or benefits.
- (i) They are responsible for holding meetings on a monthly basis.
- (j) At least three (3) trustees must be present whenever monies are being counted and/or handled, except in extreme cases when the other trustees are not available. In such case, deacons will be used as substitutes. In the absence of the Church treasurer, trustees are authorized to deposit church funds to ensure that the funds are deposited in the Bank in a timely manner.
- (k) Each trustee must participate in training courses, seminars, and classes on a continuing basis in order to find better ways to serve both the Church and community.

### **Section 13. Financial Secretary**

- (a) The financial secretary of this Church shall be elected annually, and may serve in this capacity for up to three (3) years. He/she shall be bonded, and shall come under the supervision of the Pastor and assisted by Trustees.
- (b) The financial secretary is responsible for the exacting and confidential task of maintaining accurate financial records of the members, friends, and ministries, etc. He/she shall maintain all records of the Church's finances. All financial matters, records, etc. shall at all times remain on the premises of the Church. The financial secretary shall post all financial transactions, unless otherwise instructed by the Pastor.
- (c) The financial secretary shall prepare checks for authorized signatures, and prepare vouchers when needed. He/she is responsible for paying and mailing approved bills.
- (d) The financial secretary is responsible for the preparation of monthly financial reports to the Pastor and the trustees and the quarterly financial statements to the Church.
- (e) The financial secretary shall prepare documents, letters and other correspondence regarding financial matters to members within the Church and organizations external to the Church (e.g., taxes, insurance companies, etc.) as required, approved, and directed by the Pastor.

### **Section 14. Treasurer**

- (a) The Church shall elect annually a qualified Church treasurer, who may serve for a period of three (3) years and work closely with the trustees.
- (b) The treasurer shall be bonded. His/her records shall be audited annually by an audit committee and/or public accountant or other qualified individual (s).
- (c) The treasurer shall receive monies from the trustees and deposit the funds into the bank as soon as practicable.
- (d) The Treasurer shall co-sign checks, unless otherwise instructed by the Pastor.
- (e) It is the duty of the treasurer to render to the Church, at each quarterly business meeting, an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding quarter.
- (f) Upon rendering the annual financial report at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the Church, the records shall be deposited into the permanent files kept at the Church.

**ARTICLE V**  
**CHURCH PERSONNEL**

All personnel, such as church secretary, church clerk, church director, organist, pianist, minister of music, Assistant to the Pastor, missions coordinator and the Board of Christian Education shall be appointed by the Pastor.

**Section 1. Church Secretary**

This position is located in the First Bethel Baptist Church, Inc. Administrative Office. The incumbent serves as the Secretary and provides general clerical/typing assistance and support to the Pastor

- (a) Serves as the office receptionist, greeting personal visitors and handling telephone callers. Assists with inquiries, and/or directs the inquiries, as appropriate. Personally disposes of those inquiries of a general informational nature.
- (b) Types general correspondence, bulletins, programs, forms, periodic and special reports and other office directives. Researches information required for use in bulletins/reports.
- (c) Reviews outgoing correspondence for procedural and grammatical accuracy, conformance with general policy, factual correctness, adequacy, and calls any deviations or inadequacies to the attention of the Pastor.
- (d) Operates the general office equipment for printing programs, bulletins, forms, etc. Collates, folds, inserts printed data and stuffs envelopes or attaches labels for mailing.
- (e) Maintains office files.
- (f) Maintains Pastor's calendar with authority to set-up appointments, meetings and conferences. Keeps the Pastor informed of pending appointments.
- (g) Request assistance from the clerical staff and/or volunteers when additional assistance is needed in the office.
- (h) Responsible for ordering and maintaining office supplies.
- (i) Must be computer literate, with operational knowledge of printers, copiers, scanners, and fax machines.
- (j) Performs other duties as assigned by the Pastor.

**Section 2. Minister of Music**

- (a) Must be able to enhance the worship experience and the music program at First Bethel Baptist Church, and is responsible for assisting the Church in planning, conducting and evaluating a comprehensive music ministry.

- (b) Coordinate the performance schedules of music groups and individuals, as well as rehearsal schedules.
- (c) The minister of music is responsible to the Pastor, and will be hired and terminated by the Pastor.
- (d) Perform other duties as assigned by the Pastor.

## **ARTICLE VI** **CHURCH MINISTRIES**

### **Section 1. Missions**

The work of missions is one of the primary purposes of the Church of God. Missions involve, but is not limited to, 1) the Spreading of the Gospel of God domestically and internationally, 2) the in-house spiritual advancement of the believer's religious education, edification and enrichment and, 3) the full development of the believer's verbal and non-verbal witnessing ability.

- (a) The missionary coordinator (TMC) is appointed by the Pastor and shall serve as the general administrator of the missionary program of the Church.
- (b) TMC reports directly to the Pastor and adheres to the specific and general goals and objectives set annually for the work of missions through First Bethel Baptist Church.
- (c) TMC is required to be a person who has received salvation and who maintains the qualities of character listed in Galatians 5:22-23, by being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:18).
- (d) TMC develops missionary circles within the church congregation, with each group not to exceed 15 members for missionary education, edification and enrichment; using authorized training resources recommended and approved by the Pastor.
- (e) Designs programs for visitation and helping the aged members, the sick and shut-in, and members in need as necessary, in any way possible.
- (f) Establishes programs which address the needs of the poor (homeless, hungry, clothing, helpless, food, etc.)
- (g) Maintains an open avenue for the inclusion of the church youth, (12-18 years of age, both young men and young women) in the various missionary activities.

- (h) Works with missionary education training groups, charitable organizations (public & private), health and medical groups, hospice organizations and other approved partnerships.
- (i) Develops a relationship with a community elementary school through the principal, identifying children who are in need of backpacks, school supplies, funds for field trips, underclothing, and winter coats, etc.

## **Section 2. Christian Education**

- (a) The Christian Education Ministry is responsible for the overall teaching ministry of the Church, and shall formulate and implement the policies of the church's education ministry.
- (b) The Christian Education Ministry is responsible for the training of all members.
- (c) The director is appointed by the Pastor, and shall serve as general administrator of the total education program.
- (d) The director shall consult with the Pastor concerning the education program.
- (e) The director shall work cooperatively with the Pastor in all areas of church work and assignments. The director shall serve as the church's education connection between the various organizations and the Pastor to ensure quality planning before a program is submitted to the Pastor.
- (f) The director shall perform other duties as assigned by the Pastor.

## **Section 3. Youth Fellowship (12-18)**

The Youth Fellowship Coordinator (YFC) must be totally committed to the call of God and confident of God's presence in his/her life. The youth coordinator is appointed by the Pastor to lead the youth, and to teach and involve them in meaningful fellowship and worship experiences. The youth coordinator's duties and responsibilities are as follows:

- (a) Recommend programs to the Pastor that meets the need of the youth;
- (b) Recruit and train leaders for the youth fellowship;
- (c) Facilitate the use of curriculum resources with the youth;
- (d) Plan special days and/or events for the youth;
- (e) Build good relationships with other church leaders/members
- (f) Oversee the teaching program in youth classes;

- (g) Oversee the use of facilities and equipment to be used;
- (h) Evaluate the youth fellowship program quarterly, semi-annually and annually;
- (i) Assist age-group coordinators in recruiting and orienting qualified personnel as leaders of the youth and youth educational programs.

#### **Section 4. Historian/Archivist**

The historian/archivist shall keep a journal of all events and programs of interest to the Church, and shall perform other duties as may be assigned by the Pastor.

#### **Section 5. Budget Committee**

The budget committee shall consist of the following persons and representatives: the Pastor, who shall serve as chairman of the committee, the chair of the trustee ministry, the chair of the deacon ministry, the missionary coordinator, the youth coordinator, the director of Christian Education, and the office administrator. The budget committee shall perform the following duties and responsibilities:

- (a) Formulate procedures and schedules for collection, review, and analysis of information from committees concerning their programs, proposals and expenditures.
- (b) Solicit all data from the Church's financial secretary and all ministries, their proposals and estimates of actual expenditures of money to carry out their activities during the year.
- (c) Prepare Annual Budgets which include the following process:
  - Meet with the Pastor and submit budget data for review and decisions at least sixty (60) days prior to inclusion in the annual budget
  - Prepare a proposed budget no later than the first Saturday in November, unless otherwise changed by the Pastor
- (d) Periodically confer with the Pastor to review expenditures and progress of programs in relation to the budget, and recommend, if necessary, on a quarterly basis, essential changes in the budget throughout the year.

#### **Section 6. Hospitality Ministry**

- (a) Formally welcome new members and visitors to the Church.
- (b) Mail communication to visitors.
- (c) Provide hospitality for Sunday services, special services, funerals, and any activity where sufficient numbers of church guests are present.

## **Section 7. Travel Committee**

Plan, coordinate, and make arrangements for travel projects, programs, and activities for the general Church body. Collect all monies due and make reservations for trips.

## **ARTICLE VII** **MINISTRIES**

The Church regards as an integral part of itself all ministries, formed among its members for Christian education, fellowship and service, who use the facilities of the Church. The Pastor shall have general oversight over the same. The deacons shall assist the Pastor in overseeing the various ministries as needed.

### **Section 1. Organization**

- (a) The officers of each of the ministries shall be elected by the members of the ministries to serve for a period of up to three (3) years.
- (b) All officers shall be approved by the Pastor and ratified by the church at a church meeting before such officers shall assume their elected positions.
- (c) All officers shall be tithers.
- (d) Any organization or ministry within First Bethel Baptist Church that desires to have its own rules, regulations, or by laws, must first obtain permission from the Pastor and submit a copy of the proposed document for his review and approval. The by laws, rules, regulations, etc., shall not be in conflict in any manner with the By Laws of the Church.

### **Section 2. Meetings**

- (a) Meetings may be held at the church at times that do not conflict with church meetings. Likewise, meetings shall operate under the authority and guidance of the Pastor.
- (b) No meetings shall be held without the consent of the Pastor.

## **ARTICLE VII** **CHURCH MEETINGS**

### **Section 1. Devotional Meetings**

- (a) The Church shall meet regularly each Lord's Day for worship, fellowship, and the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- (b) The Church shall meet for the observance of The Lord's Supper on the First Sunday of each month, or at such time as the Pastor may determine.
- (c) The Church shall meet at least once each week for prayer, praise and testimony. Bible study shall also be incorporated into these meetings, except during baptism.

## **Section 2. Business Meetings**

- (a) The annual business meeting of the Church shall be held on the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) Sunday in December each year, unless otherwise determined by the Pastor, with proper notice to the church members.
- (b) The regular business meetings may be held at other times as necessary, or as determined by the Pastor, with proper notice to the members.
- (c) A majority vote of the members present shall be required to ratify any Church business except in those cases and matters listed in the By Laws that require a greater number.

## **ARTICLE IX** **DISCIPLINE**

### **Section 1. Unhappy Differences**

Should any unhappy differences arise, the aggrieved member(s) shall follow, in tender spirit, the rules given by apostolic edict in Galatians 6: 1-6.

### **Section 2. Gross Breach of Covenant**

Should any matter of gross breach of covenant, or of public scandal occur, the Pastor and deacons shall endeavor to remove the offense, and if this effort fails, shall report the situation to the Church (Matthews 18:15-17) for appropriate resolution.

### **Section 3. Disciplinary Action**

All such proceedings shall be embraced with a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. However, should an adverse decision be reached, the Church may proceed to admonish and/or declare the offender to be no longer in membership with the Church.

### **Section 4. Membership Restored**

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by a vote of the Church, upon evidence of his/her repentance and reformation, or if on account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation with the advice and approval of the Pastor.

## **Section 5. Removal of Pastor**

In seeking the removal of a Pastor from the Office of the Holy Ministry, one must be certain that it is for these Scriptural reasons. All involved must take heed to the apostolic directive: “Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses” (1 Timothy 5:19). When someone must be removed from the ministry, it is necessary that the Church can show with certainty that this is the judgment and will of God. Just as the call, so also does the removal pertain to the whole Church. Because of this need for ascertaining the will of God, the early Church was careful to operate with diligent inquiry and accurate judgment in its councils when dealing with the reasons for deposing a Pastor from ministry.

If there are allegations or evidence of the Pastor having violated the prohibitions listed below, he shall be given an opportunity to answer the charges after they have been submitted to him in writing. The charges must be specific enough in nature to give him a fair and reasonable opportunity to know what he is being accused of and the time frames of their alleged occurrence. He shall be afforded at least 30 days to gather information and prepare his answer and defense. During this time, he shall be granted paid administrative leave or continue his service to the Church with the exception of pulpit duties.

The Pastor may be removed by a vote of three-fourths majority of the active membership of the Church in good standing, provided such notice of removal is read during the Sunday Church service for two consecutive Sundays prior to the date of the planned removal action. Meanwhile, the persons who are eligible to vote shall be certified based upon their giving and attendance records. All objections to the official church roll and members eligible to vote shall be resolved prior to a vote being taken. Removal of a Pastor can only be brought forward for the following reasons:

- (a) Dereliction of duties
- (b) Gross Immorality
- (c) Teaching and preaching false doctrine
- (d) Scriptural breach

In the event that the Church votes for removal of the pastor, the Church shall be obligated to pay the pastor a minimum of at least 90 days (three months) salary and benefits in addition to any unused vacation time. This amount shall be due and payable upon separation.

## **Section 6. Removal of Officers, Committee Members and Other Personnel**

After proper evaluation, removal action shall be recommended by the joint ministry board to the Pastor, and then to the Church for approval. If the Pastor or Church believes that further investigation is necessary, the Pastor may appoint an unbiased evaluation committee. Before removal actions are taken, the person(s) shall be given an opportunity for a hearing before the joint ministry board. The joint ministry board shall schedule hearings within thirty (30) days after a request for hearing is filed. The joint ministry board shall make recommendations to the Church within fifteen (15) days after the hearing date. A removal action can be brought for the following reasons:

- (a) Dereliction of duties
- (b) Immorality
- (c) Teaching and preaching false doctrine
- (d) Scriptural breach