



# Constitution & Bylaws

~~Approved November 18, 2015~~

Markup Document for December 14, 2022 Revision Proposal

## **CHURCH COVENANT OF FRUIT COVE BAPTIST CHURCH**

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

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

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions, to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealing, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to be Christ-like in all our actions; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

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

We moreover engage that when we remove ourselves 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.

# **CONSTITUTION Of FRUIT COVE BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the members, declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the Church in an orderly manner. This constitution seeks to preserve the liberties of each individual member and the freedom of action of this church in relation to other churches.

## **I. NAME**

This congregation shall continue to be known as the FRUIT COVE BAPTIST CHURCH, located at 501 State Road 13, Jacksonville, Florida 32259, hereafter referred to as “The Church.”

The Church is incorporated under the laws of the State of Florida as a non-profit religious organization, and is recognized by the state and federal government as a Section 501(C)(3) organization.

## **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Church will be to fulfill the mission of a New Testament church as expressed in the following scripture:

Matthew 28:19-20: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of 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.”

Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

II Corinthians 5:18-19: “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”

In order to accomplish our biblical mission, the Church hereby establishes the following mission statements:

- A. To be a dynamic spiritual body empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with the people of our church, community, state, and the world.

- B. To be a worshipping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.
- C. To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers through prayer and Bible study.
- D. To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.
- E. To be a church which ministers to persons in the community and the world.
- F. To be a church whose purpose is to be Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

### **III. STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS**

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the written basis for our beliefs. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation with all mankind. The ordinances of the Church are Believer's Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper.

### **IV. POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS**

The government of the Church is vested in the members of the Church. All program organizations, or committees, empowered by the Church shall report to and be accountable to the Church, unless otherwise instructed by Church action or the Church Bylaws.

This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, the Church will cooperate with and support ~~the Jacksonville Baptist Association~~ **First Coast Churches**, the Florida Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

### **V. Amendment**

Changes to this Constitution shall require a super-majority vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of the church members present and voting upon such changes.

# BYLAWS OF FRUIT COVE BAPTIST CHURCH

## ARTICLE I: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1: General

This is a sovereign and democratic Southern Baptist Church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of the Church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of the Church and the condition of such membership as outlined in this document.

### Section 2: Candidacy

Any person may present himself/herself for membership at any Church service. All persons presenting themselves for membership will be the subject to the simple majority vote (i.e., 50% plus 1) of the congregation in a Regular Business Meeting (except as provided in section E. below). Persons may be accepted into the full fellowship and privileges of membership when the following criteria are met:

- A. By profession of faith and believer's baptism by immersion.
- B. Upon receipt of a letter of recommendation from another Southern Baptist church.
- C. By statement of prior conversion experience in a church that practices believer's baptism by immersion; or by statement that records of a prior membership in a Southern Baptist church have been lost or destroyed.
- D. Application for membership under circumstances other than those in paragraph (A) and ~~(B)~~ (B) will be submitted to the **Lead** Pastor and/or other persons he may designate for review and recommendation to the Church.
- E. Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the **Lead** Pastor and/or others as he may designate for review and a recommendation to the Church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of the membership present shall be required to elect such a candidate to membership.

### Section 3: Duties of Church Members

- A. Each member shall be expected to be in harmony with the purpose and beliefs of the Church (See Articles II & III of the Constitution).

- B. All new members shall be expected to attend “new members orientation” as provided by the Church.
- C. Members shall be expected to grow spiritually using the following goals:
- Meet God daily in a set time of prayer.
  - Let God confront them daily through the Scriptures.
  - Grow in love for the Christian community and all people, remembering the command, “Love one another as I have loved you.”
  - Worship weekly
  - Be a vital participating member of one of the Church’s ministries
  - Give proportionally, with the tithe as the minimum giving goal for each member.
  - Share their faith individually by word and deed with those whom they meet daily.
- D. Members are expected to attend worship services and other ministry offerings of the Church. Members who fail to regularly attend worship services and other ministry opportunities—or who fail to achieve the goals set forth in section C above—may be subject to losing their rights to vote and otherwise participate in church business.

#### **Section 4: Rights of Church Members**

Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, each member over the age of 16 shall have the right to vote in all Church business matters and shall have the right to make motions about all the business matters of the Church in accordance with Roberts’ Rules of Order. Each member (family) will be given access to the Constitution and Bylaws. Regardless of the members’ choice to review such documents, the terms and provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws shall be binding upon all church members.

#### **Section 5: Termination of Membership**

Membership shall automatically terminate should the member:

- A. Die.
- B. Request a transfer of their letter to another Southern Baptist church.
- C. Request termination.
- D. Join another church.
- E. Be excluded by action of the Church.

## Section 6: Church Discipline

It shall be the practice of the Church to make every reasonable effort to assist any troubled member. The **Lead** Pastor, ministerial staff, and Deacons shall be available for counsel and guidance. The intent of Church discipline shall be to effect reconciliation.

- A. In all cases of personal difficulty between members of the Church, the parties involved shall endeavor to bring about reconciliation in the manner prescribed by our Lord as recorded in Matthew 5:23-24: “Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Also, Matthew 18:15-16: “Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”
- B. If any member(s) is formally charged with a specific offense which is determined to be against the best interest and general welfare of the Church, the **Lead** Pastor and Deacons shall seek to counsel with all parties involved and take every reasonable measure to resolve the charge. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of Christian love and fairness.
- C. In every case in which a member is charged with an offense not resolved under the provisions of paragraphs (A) and (B) above, the **Lead** Pastor and Deacons shall invite all concerned parties to meet and review the charges and offer such explanation and evidence as may be appropriate. After careful review and prayer, the **Lead** Pastor and Deacons shall decide the recommendations to be made to the Church. All parties shall be duly notified of the proposed course of action. The Church shall adopt or reject the recommendation without discussion through a secret ballot. If the **Lead** Pastor or Deacons are involved in the alleged offense, their role (as set forth above) shall be performed by the Executive Pastor and Trustees.
- D. Restoration. Any person whose membership has been terminated for any reason, which has made it necessary for the Church to exclude him or her may, upon his or her request, be restored to membership by a vote of the Church upon evidence of his or her repentance and reformation.
- E. If any member disseminates any view of doctrine not in harmony with the statement in Paragraph III of this Constitution (Statement of Beliefs) and shall persist in the practice after proper effort to reclaim him/her, it shall be considered an offense subject to disciplinary actions.

## Section 7: Dispute Resolution

Understanding that church congregations are made up of human beings—each of whom was born with a sinful, self-centered nature—the church recognizes that disputes among members (as well as disputes between members and the church staff) are inevitable. All church members will use their best efforts to resolve such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement in a manner that befits Christians, and they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith; recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ and seeking to reach a just and equitable solution.

To that end, all disputes, claims, questions, or disagreements arising out of or relating to these bylaws—*or any other matter*— shall be subject to the dispute resolution framework laid out in these bylaws. Moreover, the members of this church expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bring any civil disagreement involving this church or any of its members before a court of law, except that any judgment upon an award rendered by an arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

In an effort to follow the scripture’s mandates regarding legal actions against fellow-believers—while simultaneously preserving the right to have one’s dispute heard and decided—the membership of this church agrees (*to the extent possible*) to handle all disputes in the following manner:

- A. **Personal Attempts** - When any dispute arises between one or more members of this church, the involved member(s) will take time to pray about the basis for the dispute as well as the other members involved. After such prayer, the member(s) will approach the other member(s) with whom they have the disagreement and attempt to work through the dispute in a spirit of love and understanding as described in Section 6, Paragraph A. If the attempt to address the dispute directly does not result in a resolution, one or more of the members involved will approach the most senior member of the church staff (seniority determined by position) not involved in the dispute (or—if the entire staff is involved—the most senior member of the deacon body (seniority determined by tenure) not involved in the dispute), and explain the dispute. The person(s) approached will select an appropriate church leader to meet with the disputing members separately. If this effort does not result in a resolution of the dispute, the members involved will proceed to follow the formal dispute resolution procedure set forth in sections B. through G. below
- B. **Submission to Mediation** - Should the dispute resolution steps found in section A. above not lead to a full and complete resolution of the issues in dispute, the parties shall submit any remaining dispute to mediation. The mediation (i.e., where a neutral third person acts to encourage the resolution of a dispute) is an informal, non-adversarial process with the objective of helping the disputing parties reach a mutually-acceptable and voluntary agreement. Such mediation shall take place within thirty (30) days from the date any member involved in the dispute submits a written request for mediation (but not before the procedure set forth in section A. has been completed). The mediation shall be conducted and facilitated by a neutral third-party, chosen by the parties to the dispute. Should the parties not be able to agree upon a mediator, the **Lead Pastor**—provided he is not a party to the dispute—

shall pick a mediator to facilitate the resolution. Should the **Lead** Pastor be a party to the dispute, the person to select a mediator will be the first in the following list not to be involved in the dispute: Executive Pastor, Worship Pastor, Adult Pastor, Student Pastor, Chairman of the Deacons, and then each deacon (such deacons listed in *reverse* order of seniority). The basic process for conducting the mediation shall be as adopted by the **Lead** Pastor and the body of deacons.

- C. **Notice of Arbitration** - If the dispute is not resolved through the procedure set forth above within a period of sixty (60) days from the date mediation is requested, then either party may notify the other party(ies) of their desire to submit the disputes, claims, questions, or differences to binding arbitration. Arbitration, as used here, means a process by which a dispute is heard by an impartial third person (or several persons), chosen by the parties, whose decision the parties have agreed to accept.
- D. **Limitations on Arbitration Decisions** - Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline were followed. Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the **Lead Pastor** ~~pastor~~ or any church staff member or officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the appropriate procedures as outlines in these Bylaws were followed.
- E. **Arbitration Procedures** - The Procedures for Arbitration shall be as adopted by the **Lead** Pastor and the Deacons.
- F. **Disputes Involving Parties Who Are Not Members** - The church and its members hereby agree that the dispute resolution procedure outlined above is the way in which the Holy Scriptures would have Christians resolve disputes. Therefore, the church and its members all agree to endeavor to employ these procedures in every situation in which a dispute arises—regardless of who or what may be the adverse party. While it is possible that non-members may refuse to abide by some or all of these procedures, the church and its members will make every effort to encourage the use of these procedures. In no event will a member refuse any non-member’s offer to follow the framework set forth above.
- G. **Disputes Involving Former Members** - The church and its members hereby agree that the dispute resolution procedure outlined above shall apply to all members and shall survive the termination of their membership in the church. Specifically, all members of the church recognize and acknowledge that, should they resign their membership—or be removed from membership – such resignation or removal shall not negate that member’s obligation to follow the dispute resolution framework set forth above for any and all disputes arising out of their membership in the church.

## ARTICLE II: GENERAL CHURCH OFFICERS

## AND ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP

The officers of this church shall be the **Lead** Pastor, Clerk, Treasurer and Trustees. All officers of the Church shall be members of this church. ~~except when elected for interim or part time positions.~~ The church shall have **other documents relating to policies and procedures, but a Policy Manual separate and distinct from these Bylaws which contains Church policies, rules, regulations, operating procedures, committee functional statements, etc. that are not set forth in these Bylaws. While all effort will be made to keep such Policy Manual consistent with these Bylaws, should any conflict arise between **such documents** ~~the Manual~~ and these Bylaws, the Bylaws will prevail.**

### Section 1: **Lead Pastor**

#### A. Duties

1. The **Lead** Pastor is responsible for leading the Church to function as a New Testament Baptist church. The **Lead** Pastor will lead the congregation, organizations, and the Church staff to perform their assigned ministry tasks.
2. The **Lead** Pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in the Church. As such, he works with the Deacons and the Church staff to:
  - a. lead the Church in achievement of its mission
  - b. lead the Church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, and ministry
  - c. proclaim the Gospel to believers and non-believers
  - d. care for members and other persons in the community.
3. The **Lead** Pastor shall lead the Executive Leadership Team consisting of the **Lead** Pastor, Executive Pastor or Administrative Director, Worship Pastor and other Ministerial Staff as needed.
4. The **Lead** Pastor shall meet with the Deacons annually to evaluate the spiritual life of the Church relative to its mission, ministries and spiritual growth, and for prayer and planning.
5. The **Lead** Pastor will be the chief administrative officer of the Church. As such, he will:
  - a. Oversee ~~all~~ administrative functions of the Church
  - b. Serve as the President of the Corporation (Fruit Cove Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida, Inc.)

## B. Procedures for Selection

1. A **Lead Pastor** ~~pastor~~ shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs **or announced by Lead Pastor**. The election shall take place at a business meeting called for that purpose.
  - a. A **Lead Pastor Search Committee**, consisting of at least seven members from the Church at large, shall be selected by the Nominating Committee, reviewed by the Deacons, and elected by the Church. The church shall vote on the entire slate of nominees at one time. If the slate is not approved by the membership, a new slate shall be presented.
  - b. The Search Committee shall seek out only those candidates for the position of **Lead Pastor** ~~pastor~~ who ~~are cooperating Southern Baptists,~~
    - 1) are cooperating Southern Baptists
    - 2) are scripturally qualified (**e.g. – I Timothy 3 and Titus 1**) , ~~and~~
    - 3) are exemplary in their daily life ~~and~~
    - 4) **and subscribe to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000**
  - c. The **Lead Pastor Search Committee** shall prayerfully seek a minister who will be interviewed by the Deacons before presentation to the Church for consideration. The Committee shall bring only one candidate at a time for the consideration of the Church.
  - d. Any member has the privilege of making recommendations to the **Lead Pastor Search Committee**.
  - e. ~~Election~~ **Voting** shall be **at a called business meeting in conjunction with a regular Sunday service** by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of three fourths of those **church members** present and voting to issue a call.
2. The **Lead Pastor Search Committee** will be ~~assisted~~ **directed** by the Stewardship Committee **and the Personnel Committee** ~~in that~~ regarding the salary and benefits, moving and miscellaneous expenses associated with calling a **Lead Pastor**. ~~Pastor~~ This will be set ~~by the Stewardship Committee~~ prior to the bringing of a candidate for consideration.
3. The **Lead Pastor** is called for an indefinite period of time.
4. The office of the **Lead Pastor** will be vacated by:

- a. death of the **Lead** Pastor
  - b. resignation of the **Lead** Pastor (**actual or announced**)
  - c. termination of the **Lead** Pastor by action of the Church in a business meeting called for that purpose.
5. The office of **Lead** Pastor will be temporarily vacated:
- a. In the event of **long-term** illness or the disability of the **Lead** Pastor. The Deacons will make interim recommendations to the Church at a called business meeting.
  - b. In the event a leave of absence is recommended by the Deacons and approved by Church action.
6. In the event of the death of the **Lead** Pastor, continuing compensation and benefits for the family shall be ~~recommended~~ **determined** by the **Personnel Committee**, Stewardship Committee and the Deacons ~~prior to presentation to the Church in a called business meeting~~. Upon the resignation or dismissal of the **Lead** Pastor, compensation and benefits will ordinarily be continued for a maximum of thirty days from the **effective** date of ~~announced~~ resignation/dismissal. In the event the Church dismisses the **Lead** Pastor, his responsibilities will terminate upon dismissal.

## Section 2: Interim Pastor – Procedures for Selection

### A. Selection

The Interim Pastor Search Committee shall consist of a committee selected from the Deacon body. This committee shall prayerfully seek a suitable minister as Interim Pastor. He will be interviewed by the full Deacon body before presentation to the Church for consideration. Provided a majority of the Deacons approve of the candidate, he will be presented to the membership of the Church. The Church will consider one minister at a time. The Interim Pastor shall be a cooperating Southern Baptist, scripturally qualified, and exemplary in his life.

### B. Duties and Restrictions

- Preach Sunday morning message
- Do pastoral visitation (as requested)
- Attend staff meetings (by invitation)
- Assist in worship planning
- Does not have administrative oversight of the Church

### Section 3: Other Ministerial ~~Staff Members~~ Pastors and Directors

#### A. Duties

1. The duties of the ministerial staff shall be formulated by the Personnel Committee and the ~~Pastor~~ Executive Leadership Team and approved by the Church. A copy of their job descriptions shall be in ~~the church Personnel Policy Manual and/or Employee Handbook.~~ the Staff Structure Handbook.
2. The ministerial staff is ~~directly~~ ultimately responsible to the Lead Pastor. They are expected to effectively perform their work according to their job descriptions, and to lead the Church in the achievement of its mission.
3. Oversight of the Church staff may be delegated by the Lead Pastor. ~~, and the~~ The Lead Pastor and Executive Leadership Team shall ~~may~~ seek the counsel and approval of the Personnel Committee when ~~making staffing decisions~~ changing or creating new staff positions.

#### B. Procedures for Selection

1. When vacancies in the ministerial staff occur, the Lead Pastor ~~and the Executive Pastor~~ Personnel Committee shall search out qualified ministerial staff replacements or recommend to the Nominating Committee the creation of a Search Committee for such. ~~Each candidate shall be:~~ They shall seek out only such candidates who:
  - a) are cooperating Southern Baptists
  - b) are scripturally qualified, ~~and~~
  - c) are exemplary in their daily life ~~and~~
  - d) and subscribe to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000
2. Each candidate shall be interviewed by the committee(s) with whom ~~he~~ they will work. The Personnel Committee and the Deacons will also interview all prospective ministerial personnel. Upon such review and affirmation, the candidate may then be presented by the Personnel Committee ~~or appropriate Search Committee~~ to the Church for consideration. Voting shall be ~~at a called business meeting in conjunction with a regular Sunday service~~ by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of three fourths of those church members present and voting to issue a call.
3. Ministerial Staff shall have the following designations:
  - a. Associate or Executive Pastor, for all ordained men
  - b. Director, for all others.

4. Ministerial Staff are called for an indefinite period of time.
5. Vacancies will occur by:
  - a. death of a staff member
  - b. resignation of the staff member (actual or announced)
  - c. termination of the staff member by action of the Church in a business meeting called for that purpose.
6. Temporary Vacancies will occur:
  - a. ~~Due to a~~ In the event of long-term illness or the disability of the staff member. The Personnel Committee will make interim recommendations(s) to the Church at a called business meeting.
  - b. ~~Through~~ In the event a leave of absence ~~as is~~ recommended by the Personnel Committee and approved by the Church.
7. In the event of the death of a ministerial staff member, continued compensation and benefits for the family shall be determined by the Stewardship Committee and the Personnel Committee. Upon the resignation or dismissal of a ministerial staff member, compensation and benefits will ordinarily be continued for a maximum of thirty days from the effective date of ~~the—announced~~ resignation/dismissal. In the event the Church dismisses a ministerial staff member, his/her responsibilities will terminate upon dismissal.

#### **Section 4: Deacons – Procedure for Election, Duties and Term of Office**

- A. There shall be at least 12 active deacons.
- B. The Deacons shall serve a three (3) year term. They may be re-elected after a lapse of one (1) year following active service. Candidates to fill Deacon vacancies shall be filled by the Lead Pastor and the Deacon Leadership from a pool of men who have previously served the church as deacons or Yokefellows. Such men shall be presented to the church for its approval at the next business meeting.
- C. Process for Selection of Deacons.
  1. Active Deacons and the pastoral staff are charged with identifying “Yokefellows” (i.e., members who may, in time, become deacons). Prior to selection, Yokefellows shall be screened to determine if they appear to meet the qualifications for Deacon as set forth in the Scripture (e.g., I Timothy 3:8-13 “Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubled tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their

wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”). Once selected, Yokefellows will come alongside active Deacons and take on only such responsibilities as given them by the active Deacons. After a period of no less than one (1) year, Yokefellows may be submitted to the church for election as a Deacon, followed by ordination (if necessary) and appointment to serve a three year term.

2. Should any church member have a concern about one or more Yokefellows (i.e., oppose their selection and/or ultimate installation as a Deacon), such member should come to the Chairman of the Deacons or the **Lead** Pastor and explain such concerns. Any concerns raised by one or more members will be brought to the current Deacons for consideration. If the concerns prove meritorious, the Deacons may choose to remove the Yokefellow in question.

D. Duties. In accordance with the meaning of the work and practices of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the Church. The task of the Deacon is to assist the **Lead** Pastor and ministerial staff in performing ministry tasks for and with the membership; proclaim the Gospel to believers and unbelievers; care for members and other persons in the community; lead the Church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, and ministry; ~~and~~ lead the Church in achieving its missions; **and perform any other duties and responsibilities assigned in these Bylaws.**

E. Meeting. The Deacons will ordinarily meet monthly.

## **Section 5: Elected Church Officers– How and When Elected**

The Church shall have the following elected officials: Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Trustees, and Moderator. All Church officers are nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Church. All Church officers and organizational leaders must have been a member of the Church for a minimum of one year prior to becoming eligible for nomination.

## **Section 6: Elected Church Officers**

A. Clerk

1. Election

a. The Clerk shall be elected for a term of three years.

b. Term of office begins January 1, of the calendar year following election.

2. Duties

- a. The Clerk shall be responsible for the recording, processing and communicating of all records of church business. Some of these duties are:
  - i. Ensuring accurate minutes of each business meeting.
  - ii. Recording all actions voted by the Church
  - iii. Preserve the records for present and future use.
  - vii. Function as the Secretary of the corporation.
  - viii. Some of these responsibilities may be assigned to office staff to be performed under the direction of the Clerk.

B. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

1. Election

- a. The Church shall elect a Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer for a term of three years, after which they must remain inactive for one year.
- b. The term of office will begin January 1 of the year following election.

2. Duties

- a. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to oversee the Church budget and all money, or things of value paid or given to the Church. The Treasurer will be responsible for ensuring an itemized account of all receipts, designations and disbursements is kept. Some of the above duties may be assigned to office staff to be performed under the direction of the Treasurer.
- b. The Treasurer shall render to the Church at each business meeting a report of receipts and disbursements for the period since the last report.

- 3. In the absence of the Treasurer, or by request of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer shall assume all responsibilities of the Treasurer.

4. In order to assume timely payment of budgeted accounts payable, the Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer or the Chair of the Stewardship Committee will be authorized to sign checks. Two signatures are required.
5. Specific guidelines shall be contained in the Operations Procedure Manual.
6. Anyone who is authorized to sign checks shall be bonded.
7. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year (December 31) and its acceptance and approval by the Church, this annual statement shall be delivered by the Treasurer to the Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as part of the permanent records of the Church.

C. Trustees

1. Election

- a. Trustees shall be elected for a term of three years and shall be composed of three members, one of whom will rotate off each year. A Trustee may be reelected after one year's absence from service. The Nominating Committee will recommend nominees to the Church for election.
- b. The term of office will begin January 1, of the year following election.
- c. At the first meeting of the year, the Trustees will elect a chairman, vice chairman and secretary and notify the Church office of their election.

2. Duties

- a. Trustees shall serve as ~~legal custodians of the real property of corporate directors of the church.~~ ~~but~~ Nevertheless, they shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer this real estate except by an affirmative vote of the church at a properly called church meeting for this purpose. They shall execute any and all contracts, deeds, negotiable instruments, and/or other legal instruments pertaining to real property, but only when so directed by the proper and recorded action of the church body. Likewise, the Trustees shall insure that proper and adequate general liability insurance coverage and property insurance coverage are maintained at all times. Some of the above duties may be assigned to the Executive Pastor and/or other office staff to be performed under the direction of the Trustees and subject to approval by the church body.

- b. Every action of the Trustees in behalf of the church shall be recorded in minutes of Church business meeting. A copy of the Trustee meeting minutes will be given to the Clerk for filing and history.

D. Moderator

1. Election - A moderator and a Vice Moderator shall be elected for a three (3) year term of office. The Moderator shall not be the ~~Senior~~ Lead Pastor or any other member of the Church staff.
2. Duties - The Moderator shall normally chair business meetings. If he/she is unable to perform this duty, the Vice Moderator shall chair the meetings (s). The Moderator may enlist the assistance of a parliamentarian should the Moderator deem such assistance helpful or necessary. The Parliamentarian's role shall be limited to assisting the moderator in questions of procedure only. Should any disagreement arise between the Moderator and the Parliamentarian, the Moderator shall prevail.

E. Corporate Officers

1. Membership - The Church shall have ~~four (4)~~ five (5) corporate officers which are listed on the Annual Report to the Secretary of State. ~~The President of the Corporation shall be the Lead Pastor. Two (2) of the officers (i.e., President and Vice-President)~~ shall be selected from the Trustees of the Corporation (each Trustee elected shall take on the role of the Trustee whom he or she was elected to replace). The third officer shall be Executive Pastor of Church Administrator. The fourth officer, the Secretary, shall be the ~~elected~~ Church Clerk. The ~~fourth and final~~ fifth officer (i.e., the Treasurer), shall be the elected ~~church~~ Church Treasurer.
2. Duties - The officers shall perform only those duties of corporate officers for non-profit corporations which are not assigned to other church leaders elsewhere in these bylaws. Any and all such authority is subject to the oversight and control of the ~~Executive Pastor~~ Executive Leadership Team and, ultimately, the ~~church body~~ Church.

### ARTICLE III: CHURCH COMMITTEES

A. **General Committee Structure**

1. Unless otherwise indicted in these Bylaws, the number of members for each committee shall be determined by the Nominating Committee and subject to revision by the Committee Chair in coordination with the Nominating Committee.

All committee members shall be members of the Church. A majority of committee members must be present to conduct business and make recommendations.

2. The **Lead** Pastor and Executive Pastor (or other members of the church staff as assigned by the **Lead** Pastor or Executive Pastor) shall be ex-officio members of each committee. Ex officio members shall not vote on committee business unless necessary to break a tie.
3. From time to time, committees may enlist the assistance of non-committee members as needed. Such persons are to provide advice only. No voting privileges are extended to any non-members of the committee.

## **B. Election of Members**

Committee members will be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the Church for an appropriate term, and shall serve on a rotation system with roughly one third to be elected each year as necessary. After a three-year term, a member must remain off the committee for one year before re-election. Exception to the three-year appointment would be to fill vacancies on committees or originating new committees. The Nominating Committee will specify who will serve the three-year term, the two-year term and the one-year term at the time the committee is elected.

## **C. Staff Liaison(s) for Committees**

The **Lead** Pastor or his designee shall appoint a staff liaison for each committee (the liaison may or may not be the staff members who are ex-officio members of the committee).

## **D. Purposes**

The recommendations of all committees shall coincide with the mission and ministries of the Church. (See Constitution, Paragraph II).

## **E. Specific Church Committees**

### **A. Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee shall consist of four (4) members from the Church at large and two (2) Deacons. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible to select, interview and recommend to the church committee members, only after careful prayer and consideration and in consultation with **Lead** Pastor and staff.

### **B. Personnel Committee.**

This committee shall be made up of six (6) members. The Personnel Committee, in coordination with the Executive **P**astor, shall perform the following duties:

1. Ensuring that position descriptions for new and existing staff members are available and up-to-date. The committee, in conjunction with the ~~Executive Pastor~~, Executive Leadership Team shall review and rewrite descriptions as needed. An up-to-date organization chart is also the responsibility of the Personnel Committee.
2. Survey the need for additional and new staff positions in consultation with ~~Pastor~~ Executive Leadership Team and staff and make recommendations to the Church.
3. Recruit, interview, and recommend prospective staff members, other than Lead Pastor or recommend to the Nominating Committee the creation of a Search Committee for such.
4. Develop, recommend, and review annually the salaries and benefits of all church staff after an annual evaluation.
5. Update and maintain ~~the Personnel Policy Manual~~ a personnel policy manual for all staff.

C. Stewardship Committee

This committee shall be made up of six (6) members. In addition to the ex-officio staff members, the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary shall also serve as ex-officio members. The Stewardship Committee shall, in cooperation with the church staff, perform the following functions:

1. **Stewardship** –
  - i. Develop understanding of and commitment to associational missions and the Cooperative Program.
  - ii. Plan and support church ministries through budget development, promotion, and commitment.
2. **Budgeting**
  - i. Challenge members to make giving commitment in support of the church budget.
  - ii. Prepare an annual budget and present it to the Church for approval.
3. **Administration**
  - i. Work with the staff to oversee the disbursement of funds in accordance with the Church approved budget.
  - ii. Make recommendations to the Church concerning disbursement of funds not included in the budget.
  - iii. Review expenditures periodically in terms of budget allocations.
  - iv. Review and, if appropriate, approve any requests for special offerings.

- v. Secure an annual review of the Church's financial records by an independent accountant. Report to the Church the results of the annual review.

**D. Ad-Hoc Committees**

The Nominating Committee and the Church staff shall periodically review whether any other Committee(s) are needed to facilitate the ministries of the Church. If such additional committees are needed, such committees shall be recommended to the church, along with a slate of proposed committee members. The creation of the committee, and its members, shall be voted upon by the Church. The recommendation of the Nominating Committee shall indicate whether the ad-hoc committee shall be created for a finite or indefinite period of time.

**ARTICLE IV: CHURCH MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS**

The Church will create organizations and programs as needed to support and facilitate its ministry efforts. Such organizations may include, but are not limited to, Sunday School and other church training organizations, ministries targeting specific age groups, Women's ministry organizations, the Music Ministry, etc.

**ARTICLE V: CHURCH MEETINGS**

**Section 1: Worship**

- A. The Church shall meet regularly for the worship of Almighty God.
- B. Special worship services shall be scheduled in the church calendar of activities.
- D. Cancellation of these services will ordinarily require Church action except in case of emergency (hurricane, tornado, fire, etc.).

**Section 2: Business**

- A. The regular business meeting of the Church shall be held quarterly.
- B. Special meetings of the Church for transactions of business may be called by the Lead Pastor or Chairman of the Deacons (upon a written request from any committee), or from the Church at large if such written request is signed by not less than fifty (50) members. At least one week's notice shall be given for all special meetings. Notice shall specify the purpose, date, time and place for such meeting at each Church service (both verbally and in the Church worship bulletin) leading

up to the special meeting. In such meetings, no items of business will be discussed or transacted that were not listed specifically in the notice.

- C. The business meetings of the Church will be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of Roberts' Rules of Order. This fact notwithstanding, should any conflict arise between these Bylaws and Robert Rules, these Bylaws shall prevail.
- D. Members present and voting shall constitute a \_\_\_\_\_ to transact any Church business. Unless otherwise noted, a simple majority vote is necessary to pass a motion. There shall be no absentee or proxy voting. Members must be present during the meeting to vote on the business being handled during that meeting. However, members wishing to participate in the voting, but who are serving elsewhere on the church campus during any meeting (e.g., serving in the nursery, children's services, etc.), shall be given the chance to register their vote before the meeting is concluded and the votes are tallied.

### Section 3: Ordinances

#### A. Believers Baptism

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; who professes Him publicly at a worship service; and who indicated a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism.

1. Baptism shall be immersion in water.
2. Baptism shall be administered by the **Lead** Pastor or whomever the Church shall authorize.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
4. A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the **Lead** Pastor and/or ministerial staff. If negative interest is ascertained, his or her name shall be deleted from the list of those awaiting baptism.

#### B. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby Christians, through partaking of the bread and the cup, commemorate the saving death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His Second Coming.

1. The Lord's Supper shall normally be observed quarterly; or more often, as the **Lead** Pastor may deem appropriate.

2. The **Lead** Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), and the Deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper.
3. Incapacitated members may request the **Lead** Pastor; Associate Pastor(s), and Deacons to administer the Lord's Supper at their residence.
4. Anyone deeming himself or herself eligible according to Biblical standards may partake of the Lord's Supper.

## **ARTICLE VI: MISCELLANEOUS**

### **A. Indemnification**

Should any member(s) of the Church Staff or leadership be faced with actual or threatened litigation as a result of the performance of his or her proper and normal duties, the Church will provide a sufficient and appropriate legal defense and/or indemnify such staff member(s) for costs and expenses relating to such actual or threatened litigation. This obligation to indemnify and/or provide a defense shall cease if at any time it is discovered that the staff member(s) in question acted contrary to Holy Scripture, in violation of law or otherwise acted in any way that was dishonest or lacking complete candor.

### **B. Use of Church Facilities**

The Church staff and other appropriate leadership shall oversee implementation of a church facilities use policy. Such policy will ensure that the facilities of the Church are used in a manner which is consistent with the Holy Scriptures and the Baptist Faith & Message, 2000. The policy shall be drafted to ensure that any use of all or part of the church grounds or facilities (whether by members or by outside interests or entities) will be done in a manner consistent with our beliefs as a Church. Moreover, any and all use of church property shall be sufficiently documented and memorialized so as to protect the church from unnecessary exposure to liability.

### **C. Inspection of Records, Reports and Documentation**

In accordance with Florida law, every member of the Church shall have the right to inspect certain records, reports, documents and the physical properties of the Church. Such inspection shall be accomplished in accordance with applicable Florida Statutes. In accordance with existing law, the Church may restrict and limit the number of inspections or establish an orderly manner for such to be conducted.

### **D. Designated Gifts**

The Church recognizes the wish of some members to designate the way in which contributions are used. However, the Church also recognizes that all that we have

comes from God, and should be used to further His Kingdom. Therefore, the Church will accept gifts and contributions that are intended for a designated purpose. However, if the purpose designated on the gift or contribution is not to an existing account and/or ministry of the church, the designation shall be deemed advisory only (versus mandatory). In such an instance, the Church, in consultation with the donor, may choose to return the gift, use the gift in accordance with the designation, or it may choose to use the gift elsewhere. All donors to the church recognize the necessity and propriety of this discretion. The Church's discretionary authority includes the right to refuse to accept any gift at any time, for any reason.

**E. Existence of Reversionary Interest**

Subject to the concept of the autonomy of the local church (which is an integral part of Southern Baptist polity), this Church hereby establishes that it will not allow its property and other assets to be usurped or otherwise taken from it by other individuals or denominations. Thus, the true and rightful members of this church shall be comprised of individuals who adhere to maintain and propagate the traditional and historical doctrines, faith and practices of the Southern Baptist denomination (such doctrine, faith and practices set forth in the Baptist Faith and message 2000)—even though such members may comprise only a minority of the overall membership. To the extent that this church votes to cease cooperating with a Baptist Convention that adheres to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, or the church otherwise refuses to adhere to, maintain and propagate the doctrines, faith and practices of the Southern Baptist denomination (as such are defined in the Baptist Faith and message 2000), the equitable and legal title to the church's property and fixed assets shall vest in and be used for the benefit of the minority who remain true to the teachings and beliefs of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. A Reverter clause exists in the chain of title to all church property to protect this provision from dilution or omission in future versions of these Bylaws.

**ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS**

The Church officers shall periodically appoint a Constitution and Bylaws Review Committee to review the Constitution and Bylaws, recommending to the Church any modifications or revisions for Church action.

Changes in the Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the Church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the Constitution shall be made in accordance with the current Constitution. Amendments to the Bylaws shall require a super-majority vote of sixty-six percent (66%) of the members present and voting.