

**By-Laws**  
**Swann Station Baptist Church**

Preamble

We declare and establish these Bylaws to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the body in an orderly manner. These Bylaws will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action to this body in its relation to other churches.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be Swann Station Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The Swann Station Baptist Church is organized for the purpose of advancing and promoting the worship of God through the teaching and study of the Holy Bible as the revealed word of God, the teaching and preaching of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, conducting regular services of worship for spiritual training, development and benefit of each member and for the winning of souls to Jesus Christ.

This church shall be missionary in spirit, extending the Gospel through our organized religious channels to the entire world.

ARTICLE III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

(From Baptist Faith and Message, SBC (Revised 2000))

**I. The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

## **II. God**

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

### **A. God the Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

*Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.*

### **B. God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

*Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.*

## **C. God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

*Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.*

## **III. Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

*Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.*

## **IV. Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of

sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

*Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.*

## **V. God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.*

## **VI. The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

*Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.*

## **VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

*Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.*

## **VIII. The Lord's Day**

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

*Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.*

## **IX. The Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

*Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.*

## **X. Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.*

## **XI. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.*

## **XII. Education**

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

*Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.*

## **XIII. 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, 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.

*Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.*

## **XIV. Cooperation**

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations 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 churches. 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.

*Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.*

## **XV. The Christian and the Social Order**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives 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 Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the 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.

*Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.*

## **XVI. 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 the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.*

## **XVII. Religious Liberty**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it 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. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. 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 penalties for religious opinions of any kind. 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.

*Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.*

## **XVIII. The Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32;*

*1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*

#### ARTICLE IV. CHURCH COVENANT

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

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

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotion; 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 model our behavior in a Christ-like manner; to abstain from use of any substance to the extent it would harm our body; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and the spread of pornography; 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.

#### ARTICLE V. GOVERNANCE

##### SECTION 1. AUTONOMY

This church is a free, autonomous, independent body, congregational in nature with authority to determine for itself in any matter set forth in these Bylaws. It is free of any outside control, authority or power, whether governmental or otherwise, as it relates to the use of its property and all church policies.

##### SECTION 2. GOVERNMENT

The government of this Church shall be congregational in nature, and the final authority for the operation and management of the affairs of this corporation, spiritual and temporal, shall be vested in the membership of the Church, which authority shall be exercised in the manner set forth in the Bylaws. Members alone shall have the authority to adopt and amend Bylaws, approve budgets, receive members and govern and conduct the affairs of this Church. The Board of Directors' powers shall be subject to delegated powers to the congregation as provided in the Bylaws as consistent with Baptist doctrine and polity.

### SECTION 3. ASSOCIATION

The church recognizes the value and mutual helpfulness in the voluntary association of churches, which are in such agreement in faith and practice, as to make possible a spirit of fellowship and goodwill. It is recognized that association and cooperation between such churches will influence the missionary, educational and benevolent interest of each other. The church does, therefore, declare its intention as far as conscience will allow to work in mutual cooperation with other Christian groups.

### SECTION 4. AFFILIATION

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. This church shall be deemed to be in friendly cooperation with the aims and purposes of the Little River Baptist Association, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and of the Southern Baptist Convention as set forth in the constitutions of these autonomous bodies and through duly elected messengers shall participate in their deliberative assemblies, and shall as we are able, to support the missionary, benevolent and educational programs of each.

### SECTION 5. DISCONTINUANCE OF AFFILIATION AND OR COOPERATION:

The calling of a church conference for the purpose of voting on withdrawal from affiliation from the Little River Baptist Association and/or discontinuance of cooperation with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and/or the Southern Baptist Convention will require that written notice be sent to each resident member of the church, stating the purpose and time of said conference. Action to withdraw to be valid must be carried by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting. In the event of serious rupture in fellowship, it is expected that the various factions of the church will sit down in Christian love and in the spirit of prayer and seek to effectuate reconciliation or an agreeable basis of division, each being mindful of the Beatitude which says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God."

## ARTICLE VI. MEMBERSHIP

### SECTION 1. MEMBERSHIP DECISIONS

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the condition for such membership.

### SECTION 2. REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS

The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have given evidence of regeneration by the spirit of God, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have subscribed to the church covenant, Articles of Faith, and Bylaws of this church, and who have been received into membership by vote of the church. On the recommendation of the Pastor, the Deacons by majority consent may suspend the requirement for immersion baptism as a condition of membership in cases of physical inability or severe hardship.

### SECTION 3. CANDIDACY

Candidates for membership may be presented at any regular church service for membership on any of the following bases:

- A. By professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change in heart and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this church, as set forth in the foregoing declaration, may upon baptism by immersion, be received into membership by vote of the church.
- B. Members from other churches holding the same faith may be received by letter of recommendation and dismissal from their respective churches and upon vote of the church. The applying member will be in watch care relationship until the letter of transfer is received from the other church.
- C. Those who have once been members of Baptist churches, and in consequences of any particular circumstances have no regular letter of dismissal, may be received by giving satisfactory evidence of a change of heart, Christian conduct and scriptural faith.

#### SECTION 4. NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

A member of the active deacon board will provide orientation material to all new members.

#### SECTION 5. WATCHCARE

Persons presenting themselves for membership and approval by the church, shall be received under watchcare until the completion of the full requirements of membership such as receipt of letter or baptism. Persons under watchcare are entitled to all the privileges of membership except the right to vote or hold elective office. Persons in watchcare shall be given the Statement of Faith and the Bylaws. Each applicant shall agree to the Statement of Faith, subscribe to the Bylaws, and shall give their testimony to the church declaring that Jesus Christ is his or her Lord and Savior. Upon completion of watchcare, individuals may be presented for full membership according to Article VI, Section 6.

#### SECTION 6. PROCEDURE FOR RECEIVING MEMBERS

All such candidates may be presented at any regular service or meeting for membership and shall be admitted by a majority vote of members present. At the discretion of the pastor, the church may, as set forth in these bylaws, call itself into special session and vote on the membership of the candidate, or the pastor may acknowledge the candidate's request for membership and postpone the vote until some subsequent meeting.

#### SECTION 7. ACTIVE MEMBERS

- A. Any member of this church shall be considered active who supports the church through their contributions, attendance, participation, and cooperation.
- B. Every active member of the church, age 16 and above, is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference provided the member is present for such meetings. [Revised: 04-27-16]
- C. Except as otherwise provided herein, every active member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for the elective offices in the church.

- D. Every active member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.
- E. Active members shall have access to the principal records of the church including minutes of its governing body and principal financial reports, but shall **not** have access to the individual financial donor records of others or personnel files. [Revised: 04-27-16]

#### SECTION 8. INACTIVE MEMBERS

The deacons shall not less than every three years review the membership rolls of the church. For those persons who, without good cause, have not participated in the life of the church in the past year, the deacons shall seek to make personal contact and determine the reasons for their inactivity and encourage them in their relationship with the church. In the event such persons cannot be contacted, or the persons indicate a desire to be placed on an inactive roll, or the deacons believe an inactive status would be appropriate, the deacons may recommend to the church those persons to be placed on an inactive roll. The church by majority vote may then place such persons on the inactive roll. Persons on an inactive roll shall not be entitled to vote on any matter before the church. Persons may be removed from the inactive roll and return to the active church roll by congregational vote initiated by a request of the member or by recommendation of the deacons.

#### SECTION 9. DISCIPLINE

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the church, to edify believers by deterring sin, and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to the biblical standard of doctrine and conduct.

Matthew 18:15-18; I Timothy 5:19-20; Galatians 6:1-2

- A. It shall be the basic purpose of Swann Station Baptist Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the staff and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another.
- B. When offense is given to one member of the church, by the language or conduct of another, if the offense relates only to himself, and is known to none other, the offended shall, without consulting or informing any person, seek opportunity to converse privately with the offender with an honest view to reconcile the difficulty if possible. If satisfaction is given, he shall complain of the offense to none.
- C. If satisfaction be not given, it shall be the duty of the offended to select one or two or at the most three others, choosing such as he may deem best adapted to effect reconciliation, with whom he shall again privately converse with the offending brother, if satisfaction be given, he shall again make no further complaint.
- D. If these efforts fail to secure reconciliation, it shall be the duty of the offended to lay the matter before the church, for further action.

- E. If any member of the church shall be publicly guilty of any crime or gross impropriety, it shall be the duty of the member knowing of the transgression to see or write to the offender and inform him of his intention to lay the matter before the church that he may appear in his own defense.
- F. When common rumor charges a crime or gross impropriety against a member, it shall be the duty of the person hearing it to visit or write to the accused, and inform him of the reports; and if he has reason to believe that they are true, to take the most judicious steps to ascertain their correctness, and lay the charge and its evidence before the church.
- G. If a member having been errant, shall voluntarily confess it to the church, and manifest repentance, no further proceedings, except in cases of public scandal, shall be entertained against him.
- H. If a charge be preferred against an absent member, he shall, if practicable, be cited to appear at the next meeting of the church; and no member if absent, shall be censured or excluded, at the same meeting during which a charge is preferred against him.
- I. Every member against whom a charge of misconduct is preferred, shall be allowed every opportunity, both as to time, place and circumstances to vindicate him/herself.
- J. The church should not commence disciplinary proceedings, nor even entertain a charge against a member, unless the evidence is such as to make the truth of the charge highly probable, if not absolutely certain.
- K. Written testimony of any individual who is not a member of the church, may be admitted in cases of discipline; but not oral testimony except the individual testifying be connected with some church of the same faith and order.
- L. If a member fails to give satisfaction to the church in relation to charges preferred against him, or perversely refuses to appear before the church when cited, he shall be excluded.

#### SECTION 10. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- A. By Death: Death of member.
- B. By Letter: Dismissal to another church of like faith. A letter of transfer to unite with another church of like faith may be issued upon request from the church, which the member is planning to join. A letter will be granted to any member upon written request. The church in conference must pass upon all such applications.
- C. By Joining Another Church: When a member of this church joins another church, membership in this church will terminate. Upon receipt of reliable information that a member has united with another church, the Secretary shall remove the member from the roll and so advise the church of this action at the next business meeting and, where possible, advise the former member.

- D. By Church Action: The church, after due notice and opportunity for hearing and kindly efforts to make such action unnecessary, may on recommendation of the deacons, and majority vote of the church in meeting terminate the membership of persons who habitually absent themselves from the services when well and able to attend, who cannot be located or who in the decision and sole judgment of the church fail to fulfill the obligations specified in the Church Covenant.
- E. By Personal Request of the Member: A member desiring to discontinue his membership in this church may have his name removed from the roll upon written request to the Church, the Pastor or other leadership. The church shall be advised of the action taken at the next congregational meeting.

## ARTICLE VII. CHURCH MEETINGS

### SECTION 1. WORSHIP SERVICES

This church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training, prayer and fellowship. These meetings shall be open for the entire membership of the church and guests and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor. Any service may be postponed or cancelled by a committee composed of the pastor, chairman of deacons and/or Sunday school director due to unforeseen or conflicting circumstances, such as inclement weather or any other circumstances so deemed. Revival services and any other church meetings, which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the church, shall be placed on the church calendar.

### SECTION 2. BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A. Annual Meeting: An annual special meeting shall be held on the third Sunday in December for the election of Church Officers, Standing Committees, Special Committees, and any other offices and committees of the Church. The election of some officers may, at the discretion of the Church or as set forth in these Bylaws be held at some other regular or called meeting. [Revised: 04-27-16]
- B. Regular Business Meetings: This church shall hold regular business meetings for the disposition of all business matters, not otherwise provided for, to hear reports from the various church committees and organizations and to consider other matters essential to the spiritual welfare and prosperity of the congregation. The church business meetings shall be held once each quarter on the fourth Wednesday night following the end of the quarter, unless changed by a vote of the church and at other times as may be necessary.
- C. Special Called Business Meetings:
  - 1. At any regular meeting of the Church, the Pastor, or the Chairman of the Deacons may call for an immediate business conference to act upon certain specific matters of business: those being the reception of members, appointment of messengers to meetings, the granting of letters, and the annual Church letter.

2. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Chairman of the deacons or a majority of the deacons. Any twenty members may also request in writing a special called meeting, and in such event the Deacons shall call a meeting to be held in not less than one month. Notice must be provided as required by these Bylaws. No business may be conducted at such a specially called meeting except that business for which was announced when it was called.
  3. In the event of an emergency, the Pastor or the Chairman of the Deacons may, with consent of two-thirds of the deacons, call an emergency meeting without full notice to the members. Such notice as is possible will be given to the membership, and action is limited to the items requiring the emergency meeting. Such emergency meetings shall not be subject to the special procedures set forth below. No meeting under this provision may be called in regard to personnel matters.
- D. Presiding Officer: The Moderator shall preside over all church conferences. In his absence the Chairman of the Deacons shall preside as vice-moderator; in the absence of the moderator and vice-moderator, the members present shall designate some other member in good standing to preside.
- E. Quorum: A quorum shall consist of not less than ten percent of the active members of the church, except for the election of general officers, twenty percent shall be necessary, and for the call of a pastor, thirty percent shall be necessary. These percentages apply to all regular church meetings and special called meetings.
- F. Notice: Except where otherwise required by these bylaws, any requirement of notice for a meeting shall be satisfied if announcement is made at a Sunday morning worship service two weeks in advance of any meeting or action, or notice is provided in any regular or special Church newsletter mailed ten days in advance.
- G. Matters Requiring Special Procedures: On any motion properly before a business meeting dealing with the purchase or sale of real property, the employment terms or salaries of Church staff, the removal of officers, the modification in the overall budget exceeding \$1000, or the affiliation relationships of the Church, where the membership has not been given notice of the general subject and nature of the proposals to be voted upon at such a meeting, any member may, by request at such a meeting, require that the motion be referred to the Deacons or other appropriate committee, who will have up to thirty days to make a non-binding recommendation regarding the proposal. The congregation may vote upon the motion at the next special or regular business meeting.
- H. Voting: Except as provided herein, a simple majority of those present and voting shall be sufficient to pass resolutions or otherwise transact business, engage in programs or embark upon projects. Voting by proxy or absentee ballot shall not be permitted. Except as otherwise set forth in these Bylaws, the moderator in his discretion shall designate the manner of voting, except that the members may by motion made and adopted require a written ballot.

- I. Minutes: The Church Clerk shall keep minutes of each business meeting, and shall record the approximate number present, and what actions were taken by the Church. The Church Clerk shall preserve the minutes when approved as part of a permanent Church record. A copy of the minutes of the Church business meetings shall be kept at the Church office.
- J. Parliamentary Procedure: In business meetings good parliamentary law shall be followed, using Robert's Rules of Order as a general guide. The Moderator may, absent objection or with the consent of the majority, deviate from such rules in the interests of full discussion and harmony.

## ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

The officers of this church shall be the pastor, other vocational leadership as needed, deacons, clerk, treasurer, moderator and such other officers as shall be required to do all the work of the church in any of its departments or organization. All of these shall be elected by the church and shall be members in good standing at the time of election except that the pastor and other paid staff need not be members when called.

### SECTION 1. SENIOR PASTOR (hereinafter referred to as Pastor)

- A. Call: Whenever a vacancy occurs, a pastor shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the pastor or the church. The call of the pastor shall take place at a meeting especially set for that purpose, after which at least one-week notice shall be given from the pulpit during the morning worship hour. His election shall be upon the recommendation of a special search committee appointed by the church, at a regular or specially called business meeting. This committee shall be composed of active church members representing a cross section of the demographics of the church including at least one active deacon and four other church members and not include a husband and wife. Their purpose is to seek out and nominate as pastor a minister of the gospel whose Christian character and qualifications grace him for the office. The committee shall bring only one name at a time for the consideration of the church and no nomination shall be made except by the committee. The election of a pastor shall be determined by written ballot. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present and voting is necessary for the extension of the call. Should the minister recommended by the committee fail to receive a three-fourth's vote, the committee will be instructed to seek out another minister, and the meeting at which the vote was taken shall be adjourned without discussion or debate.
- B. Duties: The pastor shall have in his charge the welfare and oversight of the church; he shall be an ex-officio member of all organizations, departments and committees; he may call a special meeting of the deacons or of any committee according to procedures set forth in the By-Laws; he shall conduct religious services on stated and special occasions, administer the ordinances, minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the church and community. He shall perform other duties that usually pertain to that office; he shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall, in cooperation with the deacons, arrange for the pulpit supply when he is absent, and shall arrange, with the concurrence of the deacons, for ministers to assist in revival meetings and works to assist

in other special services required by the church. It shall be his special responsibility to win the lost to Christ; to minister to the spiritual needs of the members of his congregation, and through prayer and study to render effective preaching and pastoral ministries. The pastor shall represent Swann Station Baptist Church as a messenger to the Little River Baptist Association annual meeting and the State and National Conventions, without having to be voted on by the church each year. The pastor will have the option of not going if he so desires, with the concurrence of the deacons.

- C. Employment Policies: The pastor's salary, annuities, allowances, vacation, and weeks permitted for revivals, plus any other considerations shall be determined by the deacons prior to the time of the call and shall be continued until changed by a vote of the church. The deacons shall annually review such policies. Such policies shall not constitute a contract and are subject to modification by the Church at any time as outlined in the Policy and Procedure Manual. [Revised: 04-27-16]
- D. Termination: The Pastor is called to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the Pastor or the Church, as outlined in the Policy and Procedure Manual.
- 1) Resignation. The Pastor may resign but shall normally provide at least 30 days notice before the termination of his services. A written resignation or an oral resignation delivered at a Sunday morning service or business meeting of the Church, if without conditions, shall be final and binding. If any resignation is subject to conditions it shall be effective and binding when accepted by a majority ballot vote of the members present and voting at a properly called business meeting.
  - 2) Removal. A Pastor may be removed by a majority ballot vote of the members present and voting at a properly called meeting. Such a vote may be held only at a meeting in regard to which notice has been mailed to all active Church members with a known address of the pending action, and the Pastor is provided an opportunity to be heard. Such a vote may be initiated by the recommendation of the Deacons, by a motion calling for such a vote passed by a majority ballot vote at a congregational meeting.
    - a) The officers and the members shall make every effort to follow biblical principles including the process set forth in Matthew 18 in dealing with conflicts regarding pastoral staff. An effort should be extended to permit reconciliation of conflicts in a manner consistent with our Christian faith and doctrine.
    - b) Removal shall be effective immediately upon the adoption of a motion terminating the Pastor, but salary and benefits shall continue for not less than thirty days. Any resolution to dismiss may also contain recommendations concerning other financial aspects of the termination including severance pay.

## SECTION 2. DEACONS

- A. Number and Terms: There shall be nine deacons serving three year rotating terms.
- B. Qualifications: The deacons shall be elected from among those men who have proven themselves to have Scriptural qualifications according to I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
- C. Duties: The duties of the deacon shall be as follows:
  - 1) The deacons, with the pastor, shall have general supervision and care of the spiritual life and material development of the church. They shall assist the pastor in all matters pertaining to the advancement of the gospel and care of souls.
  - 2) The deacons shall serve at the ordinance of the Lord's Supper and distribute the elements to the congregation.
  - 3) The deacons shall assist and cooperate with the standing committees of the church in formulating policies and plans pertaining to the spiritual and material life of the church and shall make recommendations to the church from time to time concerning these matters. All recommendations must be passed by a majority of the deacons voting. The deacons may not act independently of the church in fixing policy or committing the church to any matter involving the church as a whole. The deacons shall be obligated to consider promptly any request or petition from the church and shall report back to the church its action on any such request or petition. The secretary or chairman of deacons shall report to the church in regular session the recommendations of the deacons.
  - 4) In case of disagreement or doubt as to the meaning of the by-laws, or any part of them, it shall be the duty of the deacons to interpret by majority vote the disputed section or part and report this decision to the church. The interpretation of the deacons shall be brought as a recommendation to the church and be subject to approval or rejection by the church.
  - 5) Corporate Duties.
    - a) Function as Board of Directors. The currently serving members of the Deacons shall, meeting and acting together, constitute the Board of Directors of the Church. Such Board of Directors shall change by and in the same procedure as for the terms of members of the Deacons so that the Board of Directors shall perpetually be the same as the Deacons. In their capacity as Directors, they shall have the duties and responsibilities attendant to Directors, subject however to the limitations set forth in the Charter and Bylaws. The Directors shall not have power, except as expressly authorized by the congregation, to purchase or sell or encumber any real or personal property, to install or remove officers or staff, to amend the bylaws or Charter, or to bind the corporation to any contract. Consistent with our spiritual principles, Baptist polity and long term practice, the congregation as a whole retains the authority to govern the affairs, spiritual and temporal, of the Church.
    - b. Corporate Officers. The Chair of the Deacons shall, whenever required by law or practice, serve as the President of the Corporation, having however only such express powers as are granted by the congregation, and having no power absent

such express authorization to bind the corporation in any matter or act for it. In a similar manner and subject to the same limitations, the Vice-Chair of the Deacons shall be authorized to act as the Vice-President.

- D. Nominations: Three persons shall be nominated by the church nominating committee, for a term of three years, to replace the one-third retiring from the active deacons each year.
- E. Vacancies: Any vacancies occurring among the deacons during the year shall be filled by following normal deacon nomination procedures. A man serving only one year of an unexpired term may be eligible for re-election. Deacons retiring from participation by rotation shall remain in their title of deacon and may be called upon for service by the church at any time but shall be ineligible for re-election to the active deaconry until at least one year has elapsed following their retirement from this service.
- F. Organization and Meetings: The deacons shall meet at least once a month at a time agreed upon by a majority of the deacons. They shall elect a chairman who shall preside at all meetings and shall conduct them in keeping with established rules of parliamentary procedure. He shall appoint deacon committees and call special meetings of the deacons when necessary. A vice-chairman shall be elected and shall perform the duties of the chairman in case of his absence or disability. A secretary shall be elected to perform the duties as secretary for the board of deacons.
- G. Deacon's Ordination: All men elected to serve as deacon shall be ordained deacons or shall receive ordination by laying on of hands in the manner commonly practiced in Baptist Churches. A deacon shall be ordained only once.
- H. Removal from Office: A person may be removed from this office for conduct unbecoming a Christian, or the failure to perform the duties of the office of deacon. A deacon may be removed from that office only upon the recommendation of the deacons and a majority ballot vote of the church members voting in business session.

### SECTION 3. CLERK

The clerk shall be nominated by the church nominating committee and elected by the church annually. The clerk may be reelected to subsequent terms as the church so desires. It shall be the clerk's responsibility to attend or be represented at all church business meetings, to keep an accurate record of all business meetings, to prepare the annual associational letter and to see that it is properly transmitted to the associational clerk; the clerk shall issue letters of dismissal as authorized by the church, preserve all papers, valuable records and letters that belong to the church, and preserve a true history of the church, keeping them in a safe place. It shall be the duty of the clerk to see that an accurate roll of the church membership is kept, the date and method of admission, change of name, correct mailing address and other pertinent information about each member. The Clerk shall serve as the Secretary of the Corporation.

### SECTION 4. MODERATOR

The moderator shall be nominated by the church nominating committee and elected by the church annually. The moderator may be reelected to subsequent terms as the church so desires. The moderator shall be a person using Robert's Rules of Order as a general guide and parliamentary procedures, and shall preside at all church business meetings. The moderator may, absent objection or with the consent of the majority, deviate from such rules in the interest of full

discussion and harmony. In the absence of the moderator the chairman of deacons shall preside.

#### SECTION 5. TREASURER

The treasurer shall be nominated by the church nominating committee and elected by the church annually except as stated below. The treasurer may be reelected to subsequent terms as the church so desires. The treasurer does not physically handle funds. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to disburse by check, upon proper authority, all money or things of value that are given to the church in accordance with instructions from the church. The treasurer shall keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements, rendering an account regularly to the church to be preserved by the clerk. All books, records and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be the property of the church and the church reserves the right to call for an audit of the books if and when it deems necessary. The treasurer shall upon invitation meet with the deacons, and shall be an ex-officio member of the finance committee. When the treasurer is a paid employee of the Church, employment and oversight is governed by the Church Personnel Manual and the Policy and Procedures of the Personnel Committee in accordance with ARTICLE X, SECTION .2 of the bylaws. When the treasurer is a contracted person the conditions of the contract apply. [Revised: 04-27-16]

### ARTICLE IX: OTHER CHURCH LEADERSHIP

SECTION 1. GENERAL: All church leaders subject to annual election shall be elected at least three weeks before the beginning of the new church year. All leaders serve at the pleasure of the church and may be removed by congregational action, provided before any such action may be taken, the deacons shall have a reasonable opportunity to review any such possible action and make a recommendation to the church regarding any such removal being formally considered.

SECTION 2. OTHER LEADERS: In addition to those set forth above, other leaders of the church shall be the financial secretary, Sunday school director, youth director, Women's Missionary Union director, brotherhood director, moderator, pianist, organist and such other leaders as may be necessary and desirable. All leaders of the church and its organizations, unless otherwise specified, shall be elected for a term of one year, and upon the recommendation of the nominating committee, it being understood, of course, that members of the church may offer substitute nominations for any position for which the nominating committee makes nominations. The Women's Missionary Union and brotherhood organizations shall nominate their own directors and the names of the nominees are to be given to the nominating committee to be handled as other nominations.

SECTION 3. FINANCIAL SECRETARY: The financial secretary shall receive the empty offering envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons; and from these shall give each contributor individual credit as provided in the record system approved by the church. The financial secretary shall keep the envelopes for reference at least one year after the contribution is received. The financial secretary shall also be responsible for preparing and mailing regular statements to all contributing members as the church directs.

SECTION 4. SUNDAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR: The director of the Sunday school shall have general oversight of the entire school and shall administer its affairs in cooperation with

and according to, the plans and methods of the LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, subject to the approval of the church. The director shall be acquainted with the best method of religious education and endeavor to adopt them to this school. It shall also be the duty to counsel as is deemed necessary with teachers and officers through officers' and teachers' meetings, giving advice and receiving suggestions from co-workers.

The director shall be responsible for giving a full and accurate report of the work of the Sunday school in the regular business meeting of the church.

**SECTION 5: BROTHERHOOD DIRECTOR:** The brotherhood director shall promote the work of the Baptist Men and Royal Ambassadors (RA's) as outlined by the brotherhood organization of the Southern Baptist Convention, seeking to enlist men and boys of the church in a program of missionary training, giving, and activities according to plans promoted by the brotherhood. The director shall see that a full and accurate report is given, when deemed appropriate, at the regular business meeting of the church.

**SECTION 6. WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION DIRECTOR:** The WMU director shall seek to enlist all the women and girls of the church in a program of missionary training, giving and activities according to plans promoted by the Woman's Missionary Union Auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention. The director shall see that, when deemed appropriate, a full and accurate report is given at the regular business meeting of the church.

**SECTION 7. PIANIST-ORGANIST:** The pianist and organist shall play for all public services and shall harmoniously assist the choir director and pastor in a suitable program of music for the church.

## ARTICLE X. STAFF

### SECTION 1. MINISTERIAL STAFF

The Ministerial Staff shall be composed of the Pastor and other persons who fill ministerial positions as may be created from time to time by vote of the membership. Ministerial Staff shall be recommended in the same manner as specified in Article VIII, Section 1, A: Call. Ministerial staff shall be under the immediate supervision of the Pastor, who shall establish their duties and responsibilities. The active deacon body shall, in consultation with the Pastor, review the work and ministry of the Ministerial staff. The active deacon body, in consultation with the Pastor shall have authority for causes it deems sufficient to recommend to the church suspension or termination of ministerial staff other than the Pastor, but shall only do so after an opportunity for the ministerial staff involved to appear before the Pastor and deacons.

### SECTION 2. CHURCH STAFF

The church staff shall be composed of all persons employed by the Church, except the ministerial staff. Church staff shall be employed or terminated by action of the Church, as recommended by the Personnel Committee in consultation with the Pastor. All church staff shall serve under the direction and supervision of the Pastor. Personnel policies governing church staff shall be set forth in a Personnel Manual approved by the Church and made available to all staff.

## ARTICLE XI. COMMITTEES AND COORDINATING GROUPS

### SECTION 1. COMMITTEES

- A. Creation and Election. The church shall elect such standing and special committees as may be deemed necessary to carry out the various functions of the program of the church efficiently and effectively.
- B. Composition, Duties and Election of Committees  
The composition, duties and means of election of all committees, standing and special, shall be established by the church and set forth in a Committee Handbook made available to all church members. All church committee members shall be recommended by the nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise indicated in the description below. The committee members shall serve on a three-year rotation system with one-third to be elected each year, unless stated differently in the committee description.

### SECTION 2. CHURCH COUNCIL

- A. Purpose. The primary function of the council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by church officers, organizations and committees; to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievement in terms of church goals and objectives. The council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall have as regular members: the Pastor, the Sunday School Director, Women's Missionary Union Director, Brotherhood Director, Music Director, Youth Director, and Chairman of Deacons.
- B. All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the church for approval.

### SECTION 3. SUNDAY SCHOOL COUNCIL

- A. The primary function of the Sunday School Council shall be to set the objectives and goals of the Sunday school department of the church. Furthermore, this council shall review and coordinate programs that will help our Sunday School in teaching the truths of God's Word, in assisting Christians to accurately discern what the will of the Lord is for their lives, and in leading the unsaved to a saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- B. The Sunday School Council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall have as regular members: the Pastor, Sunday School Directors, teachers and assistant teachers, and outreach leaders of all classes.
- C. All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the church for approval.

## ARTICLE XII. CHURCH FINANCE

### SECTION 1. OVERSIGHT

The Finance Committee shall have the general oversight of the finances of the church. The Finance Committee shall, after due consideration, recommend a proposed annual budget to the church for its approval.

### SECTION 2. PROHIBITED FUNDRAISING

No group or organization of this church shall hold in the name of or on behalf of this church any sale of merchandise, services, or any entertainment for the purpose of raising money, except as endorsed and recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the Church. Exceptions to this in respect to some miscellaneous funds will be allowed and set forth in the Church Policy Manual, Financial Policies, Funds Policy. [Revised: 04-27-16]

### SECTION 3. PROCEDURES

A development of an appropriate system of accounting and financial procedures that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee.

### SECTION 4. EXPENDITURES AND RECEIPTS OF FUNDS

- A. Authorization for Disbursement. No funds shall be disbursed without the express authorization of the church as provided for in the budget or separate authorization.
- B. Designated Funds. No designated funds shall be received except where the church has approved the receipt of funds for the designated cause. Separate accounting shall be maintained for all designated gifts and funds.

### SECTION 5. RECEIPT OF GIFTS OF PROPERTY

- A. Approval. The receipt of gifts of real or personal property must be approved by the church on recommendation of the Finance Committee.
- B. Church Control. Upon donation to the church of any gift of money or property, the funds or items may be used or disposed of at the sole discretion of the church subject only to any written reservations or designations as to use made at the time of the gift.

### SECTION 6. AUDIT

The Finance Committee shall assure that an audit of a type and nature they deem appropriate, is completed annually and a report made to the church by those conducting the audit.

### SECTION 7. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.

## ARTICLE XIII. ORDINANCES

### SECTION 1. BAPTISM

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; who professes Him publicly at any worship service and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism by a vote of the church membership.

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- B. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whomever the pastor shall authorize. The baptism committee shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.
- C. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
- D. A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and deacons. If negative interest is ascertained, this person shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

### SECTION 2. THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

- A. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least on the first Sunday of each quarter.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at a service of the church.
- C. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- D. The Lord's Supper committee shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

## ARTICLE XIV. LICENSES AND ORDINATION

### SECTION 1. LICENSES

When a member of this church feels the call to the ministry, he shall discuss this call with the pastor and deacons. The deacons and pastor may examine the candidate concerning his fitness for the ministry. In the event that the findings are favorable, this request for license shall be presented to the church in conference, by the deacons. The church, by majority vote, may license him as an acknowledgement of his call to the ministry and encourage the candidate to make preparation for this call. The church clerk may furnish the member with a copy of the minutes or a certificate of license as to his credentials.

### SECTION 2. ORDINATION

In the event this church has been requested to ordain a member, who has been called as a pastor or evangelist of a Southern Baptist church, the procedures shall be as follows: The church will express its approval by a vote of three-fourths of the members present at any regularly called business meeting of the church. Then the church may invite the Associational Council on Ordinations to examine the candidate concerning his fitness for the ministry. In the event the association has no such council, this church may invite representatives of neighboring Southern Baptist churches to examine the candidate and report to the Church. Then in the event the report is favorable, the church shall proceed with the ordination.

## ARTICLE XV. POLICY MANUAL

The officers shall assure the creation and maintenance of a Policies and Procedures/Operations Manual which shall contain all currently controlling policies and procedures governing any aspect of the church's affairs including policies regarding the handling of funds, use of facilities, use of vehicles of or on behalf of the church, nursery and child care, employment policies, and other policies.

## ARTICLE XVI. AMENDMENTS

### SECTION 1. AMENDMENT

These By-Laws shall be amended, altered or repealed by a three-fourths vote of all members present at any regular business meeting of the church; provided, however, that such amendments, alterations or repeals shall be given to the church clerk in writing. The proposed change shall be presented to the church in writing and explained in two Sunday morning services before a vote is taken.

### SECTION 2. COPIES

A copy of these By-Laws shall at all times be kept by the church secretary, and another copy shall be kept in the church office. All amendments or revisions thereof shall, after passage by the church, be prepared by the Secretary and included in the two official copies of the By-Laws. These amendments shall be made available to the church members generally upon request. Members may request a personal copy of the bylaws with amendments with at least a one week advance notice to the Secretary. [Revised: 04-27-16]

June 19, 2009