

Constitution Of  
UNIONTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH

Fultonham, Ohio

Adopted September 11, 2022

# **THE CONSTITUTION OF UNIONTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **ARTICLE I - NAME OF CHURCH**

The name of this church shall be Uniontown Baptist Church.

## **ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through: worshipping Him; equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study; proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture; encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and international; administering the ordinances of baptism and communion; encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers; serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ.

## **ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP**

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once committed to the Lord, identified and committed themselves to a particular local body. Therefore, Uniontown Baptist Church has a formal membership in order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early church. (Romans 16:1; I Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Philippians 1:1; Acts 11:26)

### **Section 1: Qualifications**

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration (rebirth), who has been baptized as a believer, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must believe the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

### **Section 2: Admission of Members**

- A. The Elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, prior church experience, or such other evidence, as the Elders deem appropriate.
- B. Applicants for membership shall agree, without mental reservation, to the doctrines of our church as expressed in the Statement of Faith and promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. Such agreement shall be represented by the signing of both documents.

- C. To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the Elders for admission; profess their faith to the congregation; and must be accepted by vote of a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. New members shall relinquish their membership in other churches.
- D. In the specific case of restoration from excommunication, Sections 1 and 2 of this Article shall still apply. In addition, the applicant shall confess their error and show signs of genuine repentance.

### **Section 3: Termination of Membership**

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following:

- A. Their death.
- B. A voluntary request from the member.
- C. A notice that the member has joined or intends to join with another church.
- D. Exclusion by action of this church in a matter of church discipline carried out in accordance with Section 5 of this Article.
- E. Six months where the member fails to attend a worship service of the church, unless there are known circumstances which have caused the inability to gather with the church.

The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason. (2 Thess. 3:13-15; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; Romans 16:17-18; Hebrews 12:11)

### **Section 4: Responsibilities & Privileges of Members**

- A. Members shall be privileged and expected to contribute to the ministry of the church consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God in the following ways:
  - i. By regularly attending its Lord's Day meetings and faithfully observing its ordinances, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper;
  - ii. By attending, as frequently as possible, its Congregational Meetings because under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend these meetings to discuss and vote upon decisions that will direct the church.
  - iii. By submitting to its discipline and instruction;
  - iv. By regular offerings of time and finances;
  - v. By consistent prayer for the ministry of the church;
  - vi. By protecting the unity and supporting the testimony of the church, and more specifically carrying out the principles of the Church Covenant;
- B. Only persons who are Members shall lead any ministry or hold any office of the church.
- C. A Member will be considered in 'good standing' with full privileges of a Member if they are not currently under church discipline, as determined by the Elders.

- i. If any member neglects to gather with the church family at a Lord's Day meeting for 3 months they will no longer be considered a member in 'good standing', unless the Elders validate the member's reasoning for neglecting to gather.
- ii. A member who is not in 'good standing' will be considered restored to 'good standing' when their issue of church discipline is resolved, as determined by the Elders. If the issue is the member's neglect to gather with the church family at a Lord's Day meeting, they will not be considered restored to 'good standing' until having returned to the gathering for at least one month.

## **Section 5: Church Discipline**

The church shall have authority to exercise discipline over its Members.

### **A. Purpose of Church Discipline**

- i. Church discipline has as its aim the glory of God, the preventing of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ from being dishonored, the welfare and purity of the church, the protection of the believer by deterring sin, and the spiritual growth of the offender by calling him or her to return to biblical standards of doctrine and conduct.  
(Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; II Corinthians 6: 14-7: 1; Ephesians 1:25 4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12; Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; I Timothy 3:7; II Peter 2:2; I John 3:10; I Corinthians 5: 6-7; II Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2; Hebrews 12:4-11)
- ii. Church discipline is necessary when a member acts in a way to render doubtful their profession of faith in order that the church may continue to affirm their profession of faith and invite them to participate in the Lord's Supper.
- iii. The end goal of such discipline is repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined. (Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; I Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; I Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; I Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; I Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:10, 13-14; James 1:22)
- iv. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them. (Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; I Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; I Thessalonians 5:14; I Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25)

### **B. Causes for Church Discipline**

- i. If any member is conducting their lives in unrepentant sin and that sin is clear and serious causing the reputation of Christ and His church to be dishonored. (I Cor. 5:11)
- ii. If any member of this church is embracing or advocating any false doctrine. (Gal. 1:9; II John 10)
- iii. If any member is causing strife or sowing discord among the brethren of this church. (I Cor. 11:16; Rom. 16:17; Prov. 6:16-19; Titus 3:10,11)
- iv. If any member of this church is refusing to regard the authority structure of this church in matters of doctrine, discipline, government, etc. (Heb. 13:7; I Tim. 5:17; Matt. 18:15-17)
- v. If any member is consistently neglectful of their responsibilities enumerated in Section 4 above or the Church Covenant.

### **C. Process of Church Discipline**

The church will exercise discipline when necessary and in conformance with God's Word and Spirit as found in passages such as Galatians 6:1-2, Matthew 18:15-18. Generally, church discipline should only be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. The following steps should ordinarily be followed in exercising correction or discipline of a member. However, seeking guidance from the Elders may be appropriate at any point.

- i. It shall be the duty of any church member who has knowledge of an erring person's unbiblical beliefs or misconduct to warn and to correct the erring person in private.
- ii. If the erring person does not heed the warning above, then the warning member shall again go to the erring person accompanied by at least one witness, preferably two, to warn and correct the erring person, seeking his or her repentance and correction.
- iii. If the erring person still refuses to heed this warning, then, the matter shall be brought before the Elders for consideration prior to presenting the matter to the entire church. The Elders will have the authority to examine, admonish the individual, seek repentance from the individual, dismiss the matter, or bring the matter before the entire congregation if they deem necessary.
- iv. Generally, the Elders shall bring the matter before the congregation when they believe there is a need for public discipline, removal from a church office, or exclusion from the church. (Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Timothy 5:19-20)
  - a. By majority vote the membership present at a called congregational meeting may exercise public discipline upon an erring individual, short of exclusion or removal from an office in the church.
  - b. Only by a recommendation of the Elders and 3/4 vote of the membership at a called congregational meeting may an individual be excluded from membership. (1 Corinthians 5)
    - Normally, an excluded member shall not be denied access to the church gathering or other gatherings of the body. However, they shall be denied access to the Lord's Supper and privileges reserved for members such as holding an office or leading any ministry within the church.
    - To be restored to the church, an excluded member shall adhere to Section 2, D above. (2 Corinthians 2:5-11)
  - c. Only by a recommendation of the Elders and 2/3 vote of the membership at a called congregational meeting may a Deacon be removed from their office.
  - d. Only by a 3/4 vote of the membership at a called congregational meeting may an Elder be removed from their office.

## **ARTICLE IV - GOVERNMENT**

### **Section 1: Church Offices**

The Biblical offices in the church shall be Elders and Deacons, but final earthly authority is vested in

the body which composes its membership. The church shall be subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body of any kind, either inside or outside the local church.

## **Section 2: Elders**

Certain men shall be recognized as gifted, qualified, and aspiring to serve in this calling to guide and oversee the church as under-shepherds of the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **A. Responsibility**

- i. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the Elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word, and shepherding the body of believers at Uniontown Baptist Church, particularly in terms of the teaching and preaching ministries.
- ii. Oversight of the ministry, resources, and facilities of the church shall be vested in the Elders.
- iii. The Elders shall have responsibility to lead in matters concerning the overall vision and direction of the church.
- iv. Elders shall take particular responsibility to oversee the examination and counsel of candidates for membership, baptism, and/or marriage; examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions; oversee the work of Deacons and appointed church agents and committees; conduct worship services; administer the ordinances of baptism and communion; equip the membership for the work of the ministry; encourage sound doctrine and practice; admonish and correct error; oversee the process of church discipline; and coordinate and promote the ministries of the church.
- v. The Elders should seek to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, affirm our fundamental gospel convictions and do not teach our church anything contrary to the Word of God and the Statement of Faith.
- vi. Each year the Elders, after consultation with the Deacon of Finance and other Deacons, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a regular or specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following Congregational Meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the Elders.
- vii. The Elders shall be responsible for creating Biblical performance standards for officeholders as appropriate. They shall also be charged with establishing the process to be used for evaluating the faithfulness of each officeholder (Elders, Pastor, Deacons, etc.) to their respective appointments and allowing each officeholder to reflect upon their calling.
  - a. The Elders shall incorporate the church body in this process as appropriate.
  - b. The Elders shall also be charged with proposing any salary recommendations or adjustments to the congregation.
- viii. The Elders shall be responsible for determining when the church shall gather for worship, programs, or special events.

B. Qualifications

- i. Elders shall satisfy the qualifications for the office of Elder as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- ii. In accordance with Scripture, women shall not serve as Elders. (1 Timothy 2:12 and 3:2)
- iii. All Elders shall be members of the church.
- iv. No Elder shall hold the office of Deacon during his tenure.

C. Term of Office

- i. Consideration for electing additional Elders shall occur as needed and shall follow the procedures for elections outlined in Article V, Section 2, H.
- ii. Each Elder will serve an indefinite term. However, the Council of Elders shall review each Elder's qualifications, giftedness, calling, and desire for the office and responsibilities at least every two years. In this evaluation alluded to in Section 2, A, vii above, the Elders shall incorporate the Congregation as necessary and bring any needed recommendations before the Congregation.
- iii. An Elder will commence their duties immediately upon their election.
- iv. An Elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an Elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the Elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and 1 Timothy 5: 17–21. Any of the Elders may be dismissed by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of the members at any Congregational meeting of the church.

D. Council of Elders

- i. The Elders shall ideally be comprised of an odd number of men and not less than three, when possible. The number should generally fluctuate with the size of the membership.
- ii. The Elders shall elect a Chairman of the Elders who shall preside at the Elders meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of Congregational meetings. For purposes of compliance with nonprofit corporation laws the Chairman of the Elders shall serve as the president of the corporation.
- iii. A majority of the Elders shall be laymen, that is, church members not in the regular pay of the church.
- iv. The Council of Elders shall be responsible for keeping and amending, as necessary, the Operations Policy Manual. Said manual shall contain certain policies and administrative guidance approved by the Council of Elders pertaining to items such as, but not limited to; financial procedures, Deacon positions, facility use, schedule for events and programs, ordinances, etc.
- v. The Elders shall meet regularly to communicate, strategize, pray, and read God's Word together as they seek the Lord's Will in member care, ministry and missions, administration, general direction, financial matters, etc.

E. Pastor (Preaching & Teaching Elder; 1 Timothy 5:17-18)

- i. The Pastor shall be an elder. He shall adhere to all of the responsibilities, qualifications, term of office, and council of Elders as described in subsections A-D above. In terms of formal authority, there shall be no distinction between an Elder

- and the Pastor. The Pastor shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry as a leader who labors in preaching and teaching.
- ii. Ideally, a Pastor shall be set aside by the church for full-time ministry when the circumstances allow. The church shall decide what compensation is appropriate for the Pastor.
  - iii. The Pastor shall have the primary responsibility for preaching and teaching the scriptures in public meetings of the church. This will normally include Lord's Day gatherings, special events, baptisms, weddings, funerals, counseling, and the like for Uniontown members. However, any Elder shall be qualified and vested to serve in a leading, teaching, preaching role on these occasions, as appropriate.
  - iv. This church is structured such that it is not necessary for the church to have the Pastoral office filled in order to function as a New Testament Church. In the case that the Pastoral office is unfilled, the Elders will continue to be fully capable and called to lead, teach, and oversee the church, fulfilling all duties that might otherwise be completed by the Pastoral office.

### **Section 3: Deacons**

The church shall recognize men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service, and appoint them to the office of Deacon. (The term Deacon in this Constitution shall incorporate both a male Deacon and a female Deaconess)

#### **A. Responsibility**

- i. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, Deacons shall not exercise a ministry of spiritual authority, but shall support the Elders' ministry of the Word, work to maintain the unity of the church, and care for the physical needs of the church.
- ii. The church may recognize Deacons to take responsibility for a variety of specific needs in the church. A list of current Diaconal positions addressing existing needs and a description of the capacity and responsibilities of each diaconal position shall be found within the Operational Policy Manual.
- iii. Deacons should encourage church members involvement by providing a good example in practicing spiritual faithfulness, integrity, and helping the church develop a caring atmosphere.

#### **B. Qualifications**

- i. Each Deacon shall satisfy the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:3.
- ii. In accordance with Scripture, men and women may serve as Deacons.
- iii. All Deacons shall be members of the church.
- iv. No Deacon shall hold the office of Elder during his tenure.

#### **C. Term of Office**

- i. Each Deacon position shall serve a particular need of the church, and shall be created or dissolved upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent



agreement of a majority of the Members present and voting on the question at any Congregational Meeting.

- ii. Each Deacon will serve an indefinite term. However, the Council of Elders shall review each Deacon's qualifications, giftedness, calling, and desire for the office and responsibilities at least every two years. In this evaluation alluded to in Section 2, A, vii above, the Elders shall incorporate the Congregation as necessary and bring any needed recommendations before the Congregation.
- iii. A Deacon will commence their duties immediately upon their election.
- iv. A Deacons' term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. The Deacon may be dismissed from the office upon a recommendation of the Elders and a subsequent 2/3 vote of the membership at a called congregational meeting. A Deacon position may be eliminated upon a recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of a majority vote of the membership at a called congregational meeting.
- v. In the event a Deacon position becomes vacant, the Elders may appoint a person to fill that position and assume its responsibilities, until such time as some person can be duly recognized by the church as a Deacon.

D. Organization

- i. The Deacons shall not meet together as a body. Each position shall function under the authority of the Elders and shall report to the Elders for direction and needs.
- ii. A Deacon may serve in one or more Deacon positions as listed in the church Operational Policy Manual.
- iii. Deacons may utilize other members of the church to aid them in fulfilling the duties assigned to them. Deacons, with the agreement of the Elders, may also establish committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church. Any such committee member may serve under more than one Deacon ministry at a time.
- iv. The number of Deacons shall fluctuate as the church has need.

## **ARTICLE V - MEETINGS**

### **Section 1: Worship Gatherings**

The church shall gather together for public worship each Lord's Day, and at other times throughout the week as the church may determine.

### **Section 2: Congregational Meetings**

Congregational Meetings will be open to any member of the church in good standing and will be utilized for the purposes of communication, decision making, and seeking the Lord's Will. Within these meetings Members shall act in a spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is suitable for the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- A. The church shall hold a regular Congregational Meeting at least every other month, which shall not be held in place of the regular Lord's Day gathering, but at some other

time. Each December the Elders shall propose a schedule of regular Congregational Meetings for the following year that the membership will vote upon.

- a. Any deviation to the schedule of regular meetings shall require that the date, time, and place of such meeting shall be announced at every public meeting of the church for one week immediately prior to the Congregational Meeting in question.
- B. The Elders, whenever they deem it necessary, may call a special Congregational Meeting.
  - a. Special Meetings shall require that the Elders attempt to contact each member in good standing and give them the date, time, place, and purpose of the Special Meeting at least 48 hours immediately prior to the Special Congregational Meeting in question.
- C. The Council of Elders shall select one of the Elders to preside as Moderator at all Congregational Meetings.
- D. Congregational Meetings shall proceed according to a reasonable order, and the Members present shall constitute a quorum to do business. Motions shall be adopted upon the agreement of a majority of the Members present and voting on the question, except on matters otherwise provided for in this constitution.
- E. Members must be physically present in order to vote. The exception to this rule is if the Elders decide to permit the use of technology within any particular meeting that would allow for members to reasonably participate in the live discussion and vote.
- F. The church, duly assembled in a Congregational Meeting, shall be responsible to do the following, but not necessarily in each meeting (The list below is not an agenda for the Congregational Meetings):
  - i. To elect officers;
  - ii. To receive applicants into church Membership;
  - iii. To recognize termination of Membership due to death, transfer of Membership, or voluntary resignation;
  - iv. To exercise church discipline;
  - v. To approve a church budget;
  - vi. To approve the annual schedule of Congregational Meetings;
  - vii. To hear reports from the Elders and, from time to time, the various Deacons or others invited by the Elders; and
  - viii. To take any other action they deem necessary or desirable, that is not contrary to this constitution.
- G. Elections:
  - i. Elder & Deacon Elections:
    - a. Whenever it is deemed necessary by the Council of Elders or the Congregation to add or fill an office of Elder or Deacon, the Elders shall at any regular Congregational Meeting, solicit from the congregation recommendations for appointments to said offices of Elder and/or Deacon. Such recommendations shall be given to the Elders in private, and not publicly. The Elders shall give due consideration to any recommendation received.

- b. Elders and Deacons shall be selected as follows: The Council of Elders shall at any regular Congregational Meeting present to the church a list of nominees for the office of Elder and a list of nominees for the office of Deacon. For a period of at least one month, the church shall consider whether such nominees are qualified for the office. If any Member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified, that Member shall express such concern to the Elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove names from the list of nominees. No name shall be added to the list of nominees which was not included on the initial list. When a period of one month has elapsed, the Elders shall at the next regular Congregational Meeting present a final list of nominees to the church, who shall vote Yes or No by ballot on each of the nominees in turn. The Moderator or his delegates shall count the votes, and any Elder nominee having the approval of at least 3/4 of the Members present and voting on his nomination shall be an Elder, and any Deacon nominee having the approval of at least 2/3 of the Members present and voting on his/her nomination shall be a Deacon, whom the church shall, in due haste, publicly recognize and set apart as such.
- ii. Pastor Elections:
  - a. When the Pastoral office is unfilled the church will actively seek and discern God's calling of a new Pastor to the church from within or outside of the existing body. When a member believes there is a man within the body or one being called from another body to potentially serve in the office of Pastor, the name of that man shall be submitted to the Elders for their consideration.
  - b. If the Elders are satisfied with the nominee's qualifications, gifting, and calling, they shall forward the name of the nominee to the congregation at a Congregational Meeting.
  - c. For a period of at least one month, the church shall consider whether such nominee is qualified for the office. If any Member believes the man to be unqualified, that Member shall express such concern to the Elders, who may, on the basis of that advice, remove said name from consideration. When a period of one month has elapsed, the Elders shall at the next regular Congregational Meeting present the nominee and any additional pertinent information or recommendation from the Elders. The Congregation shall vote Yes or No by ballot on the nominee. The Moderator or his delegates shall count the votes, and a nominee having the approval of at least 3/4 of the Members present and voting on his nomination shall be the Pastor, whom the church shall, in due haste, publicly recognize and set apart as such.
- iii. Interim Moderator Elections:
  - a. In the event that the Church has no Elders, the Church shall at the next Regular Congregational Meeting elect an Interim Moderator, who shall at each subsequent Regular Congregational Meeting nominate one or more

men to serve as Elders, pursuant to Article V, Section 2, H of this Constitution, until an Elder is elected. The office of Interim Moderator shall dissolve immediately upon the election of an Elder.

H. Voting Requirements:

- i. Only members who are in good standing and are at least 18 years old are eligible to vote.
- ii. Unless otherwise specified, any vote will pass by a simple majority of those voting within the present quorum at any congregational meeting. Exceptions to this rule are as follows:
  - a. Appointing or terminating any Elder shall require a vote of 3/4 majority of those voting.
  - b. Appointing or terminating any Deacon shall require a recommendation from the Elders and a corresponding vote of 2/3 majority of those voting.
  - c. Amending this Constitution shall require a vote of 2/3 majority of those voting. Specifically amending the Statement of Faith or Church Covenant will also require the recommendation of the Elders.
  - d. Approving the exclusion of an individual from membership shall require a recommendation from the Elders and a corresponding vote of 3/4 majority of those voting.
- iii. It shall be the responsibility of the Moderator to determine the most appropriate method of voting (voice, hand raising, ballot, etc.) for each vote, unless a specific method is identified elsewhere within this Constitution.

#### **ARTICLE VI - RATIFICATION**

This Constitution shall be ratified upon the approval of 2/3 of the Members present and voting on the question at any regular business meeting of the church.

#### **ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS**

##### **Section 1: Statement of Faith and Church Covenant**

The Statement of Faith or Church Covenant shall be amended upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of 2/3 of the Members voting on the question at any regular Congregational Meeting, provided the Amendment shall have been offered in writing at any previous regular Congregational Meeting, and shall have been announced at every public meeting of the church for two weeks immediately prior to final consideration.

##### **Section 2: Constitution**

This Constitution shall be amended by a vote of 2/3 of the Members voting on the question at any regular Congregational Meeting, provided the Amendment shall have been offered in writing at any previous regular Congregational Meeting, and shall have been announced at every public meeting of the church for two weeks immediately prior to final consideration.

## **ARTICLE VIII - INDEMNIFICATION**

### **Section 1: Mandatory Indemnification**

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the Elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

### **Section 2: Permissive Indemnification**

At the discretion of the Elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

### **Section 3: Procedure**

If a quorum of the Elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of Elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

## **ARTICLE IX - DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve ordinary civil disputes among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. In the case of criminal activity within the congregation, the State has a God-given responsibility to protect the peace and security of its citizens that should be supported and encouraged. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

## **ARTICLE X – DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS**

From time to time the church, in exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. All contributions to these funds shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Elders. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of its tax-exempt purposes.

## **ARTICLE XI – RECORDS, REPORTS, AND DOCUMENTATION**

The church shall keep adequate and accurate records as specifically identified in the Operations Policy Manual. Members in good standing of Uniontown Baptist Church shall have the absolute right, at any reasonable time, to inspect all records, reports, and documentation, except contribution records or records of confidential nature such as personnel records. Members shall have the right to inspect the physical properties of Uniontown Baptist Church.

## **ARTICLE XII – DISSOLUTION**

In the event that the Elders of the church determine that there is reasonable cause to dissolve the Uniontown Baptist Church as a corporate entity, the Elders shall recommend dissolution to the membership. The Elders shall call a special Congregational meeting as set out in Article V, Section 2. Notice of the meeting shall be sent in writing to the membership and posted at all entrances to the church building no less than sixty days prior to the meeting. The notice shall state that the purpose of the meeting is to consider dissolution of the corporation and how the assets of the corporation will be distributed after all creditors have been paid. At least 3/4 of the members present at the meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the proposal of dissolution.

After approval of dissolution by the members, all of the corporation's debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated, as approved by a simple majority of the members present at a Congregational meeting, to one or more religious organizations which meet the qualifications described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of exclusively for such exempt purposes by a court of competent jurisdiction where the principal office of the corporation is then located.