

Ebenezer Baptist Church

Church Constitution/Bylaws

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As Amended and Adopted 2016

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CONSTITUTION and BY LAWS of the Ebenezer Baptist Church

An Ohio, Nonprofit Religious Corporation

PREAMBLE TO THE BY LAWS

Ebenezer Baptist Church endeavors to be a church of the Lord Jesus Christ as described, established, and mandated by the New Testament. The purpose of this Constitution and By Laws is to help us accomplish the task of this Church in a "decent and orderly" manner through the use of effective and efficient means of good stewardship of the body's time, gifts and resources. Our ultimate desire is to bring glory to God through the Church.

This Constitution and By Laws are to provide general guidance on the organization, governance and operation of the Church, based upon biblical principles and practices. However, the ultimate authority for the Church's organization, governance and operation is the Bible. When a conflict or ambiguity exists concerning any provision of this Constitution and By Laws, deference is to be given to the biblical references to resolve the conflict or ambiguity. This document shall also take the place of the Code of Regulations required by Ohio's statutes and may also be referred to as the Church's Code of Regulations.

ARTICLE I: NAME AND PRINCIPAL OFFICE

SECTION 1.01

The name of the Corporation is the Ebenezer Baptist Church. This Corporation will be further referred to in this Constitution and By Laws as the "Church". The Church maintains its principal office at 6935 Township Road 234, Logan, Ohio 43138.

ARTICLE II: MISSION

SECTION 2.01 EXPRESS MISSION OF EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH

To glorify God by helping believers love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul and might, (Deut. 6:4-5; Mt. 22:36-38; 1 Jn. 4:7-21) bringing them to maturity and unity, (Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 1:24-29; Jn. 17:20-26) that by our witness, the world may believe God sent His Son, Jesus Christ. (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Mark 16:15)

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

SECTION 3.01 EXPRESS PURPOSE OF EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH

TO *Exalt* the name of Jesus Christ through individual and corporate **worship**.

TO *Equip* the saints for the works of ministry through **instruction** in the Word of God, so the body may grow in the knowledge of the Son of God, to become mature disciples, and to fulfill the measure of the stature, which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

TO *Edify* one another through **ministry** and **fellowship** by encouraging one another and building up the body into a unity of faith in Jesus Christ.

TO *Evangelize* our community, state, country, and world by **evangelism** that proclaims the Word of God and calls people everywhere to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ through faith.

TO *Enable* the body to fulfill this ministry purpose, through **service** and the use of wise **stewardship** that enhance and protect the numerous resources that God has so faithfully entrusted to this body of believers.

SECTION 3.02 ORGANIZED PURPOSES

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code including, but not limited to, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, colleges, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, crisis pregnancy centers, missionary auxiliaries, print shops, day care centers, camps, nursing and retirement homes, cemeteries, and any other ministries that the Pastor(s), Deacon Fellowship and congregation may be led of God, all of which are established for the benefit of the members of the Church by providing opportunities for spiritual, physical, intellectual, social and cultural development. The Church's Articles of Incorporation do appropriately limit the Church's purposes to said religious activities.

SECTION 3.03 DISTRIBUTIONS OF EARNINGS

No part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefits of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene (including the publishing or distribution of statements) in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the Church shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or any corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE IV: DISSOLUTION OF CORPORATION

SECTION 4.01 ASSET DISTRIBUTIONS TO ORGANIZATIONS

If this Church should ever be dissolved, all of its assets remaining after payment of all outstanding debts and obligations, costs, together with the expenses of such dissolution shall be distributed to such nonprofit organization(s) which operate exclusively for religious purposes, as shall at that time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Furthermore, assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with the Church's Doctrinal Statements as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation and this Constitution and By Laws.

SECTION 4.02 ASSET DISTRIBUTIONS BY MEMBERSHIP

Members of said Church, as defined in the Constitution and By Laws, who are in good standing at the time of the dissolution of the said Church, shall, in a specially called meeting, designate the religious organization(s) to receive said those net assets of the Church after dissolution. However, none of the assets of said Church shall be distributed to any member, elder, officer, or staff of this Church, or any other individual.

SECTION 4.03 ASSET DISTRIBUTIONS BY A COURT

Any such assets which are not disposed of above shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the Church is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which organizations must be organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes.

ARTICLE V: STATEMENT OF FAITH

SECTION 5.01 THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible, and God-breathed and, therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical and historic meaning. Scripture 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.

Scripture is 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.

We also affirm the 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, the 1982 Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics and the 1986 Chicago Statement on Biblical Application that were drafted and approved by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. Copies of those documents can be obtained on the Internet at <http://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI.shtml> or upon request at the Church office.

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.

SECTION 5.02 THE GODHEAD (GOD)

We believe the Scriptures teach 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 degree of love, reverence and obedience. God is triune, eternally existing in three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections.

Matthew 28:19; John 14:26, 15:26; II Corinthians 13:14; I Peter 1:2; I John 5:7.

SECTION 5.03 GOD THE FATHER

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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 omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, 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; I 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; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; I Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; I Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17. 8

SECTION 5.04 GOD THE SON

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God (His deity), having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. Jesus took upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identified Himself completely with mankind, yet without sin.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His

death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. 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. We believe the Scriptures teach that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, he fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor and Advocate. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission.

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.

SECTION 5.05 GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of 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.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit inspired holy men of old to write the scriptures which assist believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures through illumination. In addition, the Holy Spirit cultivates Christian character and comforts believers.

We believe the Scriptures teach that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer by which the believer should serve God through His church. We believe that the sign gifts such as speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles and healings were primarily given for the authentication and propagation of the gospel in the early church and that the —experience-oriented theology of many in the Charismatic movement is false teaching. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit in Scriptures or church history. This does not limit the sovereignty of God or His ability to perform miracles as He so chooses today. God can choose to heal physically through the prayers of the believers, and do as He so pleases in anything for His glory. We believe in anointing with oil and praying for the sick as so directed in scripture also knowing that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection.

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; James 5:14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

SECTION 5.06 MAN (MANKIND)

We believe the Scriptures teach that man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. God 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. Through the temptation of Satan, man by his free choice transgressed the command of God and fell from his original innocence. As a result man inherited a sinful nature, is alienated from God and under condemnation. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. Only the grace of God can bring man into holy fellowship with God and enable man to fulfill the creative purposes 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.*

SECTION 5.07 SALVATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, 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.

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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 Savior.

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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.

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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.

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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.

SECTION 5.08 GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE AND THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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, which is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

We believe the Scriptures teach that once saved, all the redeemed are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, can 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, 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. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh.

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; 3:15; 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; Titus 2:11-15; 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.

SECTION 5.09 THE CHURCH

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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 (baptism and communion), 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. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. We believe in single (multiple when dictated by growth) pastor (elder) congregationalism view of church polity. Even when growth dictates the need for multiple pastors (elders) the senior pastor remains the decisive spiritual leader of the body. It is important to note that within the New Testament model of church organization, authority for leadership is not granted to just one individual minister, nor is it given to a democratic rule by the congregation. Instead, the Scripture states that authority for leadership is conducted by godly leaders who are appointed by the church and accountable to God. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors (elders) and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder and deacon is limited to men as stated in Scripture in the epistles to Timothy and Titus.

We believe this definition of the local church leads to these Scriptural distinctives:

(1) The sole authority of the Scriptures for faith and practice; (2) Autonomy of the local church; (3) Believers' baptism by immersion before church membership; (4) Two offices, the pastor - elder - bishop and deacon; (5) Two symbolic ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion); (6) the individual priesthood of the believer and soul liberty; (7) the separation of church and state which means that the church is free to operate without government intervention, however it does not mean that the church should not have a spiritual impact, directly or indirectly, on the state. We believe the Scriptures teach 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, nation and denomination.

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.

SECTION 5.10 BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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 Savior, 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 at the Church.

We believe the Scriptures teach that The Lord's Supper (Communion) is a symbolic act of obedience whereby obedient believers, through partaking of the bread and the juice, memorialize the death of Jesus Christ our Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. This biblical ordinance should always be preceded by solemn self examination.

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.

SECTION 5.11 THE LORD'S DAY

We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. It is a Christian institution for regular observance by giving of our time and resources to further our evangelistic outreach. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with each 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.

SECTION 5.12 SEPARATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that every believer should be separated unto God from the world. Each believer, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, should walk in Christian love and holiness, exhibiting qualities of honesty, integrity, forgiveness and loving-kindness. We further believe that any achievement in these characteristics will be evidenced by sincere humility and genuine zeal for the advancement of the cause of Christ. We also believe the Scriptures admonish every believer not to love the world or the things in the world, but rather to flee evil desires, avoid every kind of evil, refrain from questionable practices and immodest appearances which destroy one's testimony, offend one's brother and fail to glorify God.

Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Corinthians. 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

SECTION 5.13 THE KINGDOM

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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. However, the full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the bodily 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.

SECTION 5.14 DISPENSATIONS

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Seven of these dispensations—Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law/Israel, Grace/Church, and the Kingdom—are the subjects of revelation in Scripture. However, these dispensations do not negate God's covenants from both the Old and New Testaments, but are intertwined with those covenants with great harmony.

Genesis 1:28-3:6; Genesis 3:7-8:14; Genesis 8:15-11:9; Genesis 11:10-Exodus 18:27; Exodus 19-John 14:30; Acts 2:1-Revelation 19:21; Revelation 20:1-15

SECTION 5.15 LAST THINGS

We believe the Scriptures teach the personal, imminent, bodily return of Christ who will rapture His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with all of His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the nation of Israel.

We believe the Scriptures teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the souls of the redeemed are, at the moment of physical death,

absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. We believe the Scriptures teach that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when their soul and body will be reunited, they shall be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment, and then, they shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment.

Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 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.

SECTION 5.16 ISRAEL

We believe the Scriptures teach in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the church, she will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ.

Genesis 13:14-17; Romans 11:1-32; Ezekiel 37

SECTION 5.17 EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

We believe the Scriptures teach 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 gives the saved the birth of a 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 and the making of disciples in all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness under girded 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.

SECTION 5.18 STEWARDSHIP

We believe the Scriptures teach that God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual. The Scriptures also teach that all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship of 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. We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights and responsibilities to direct the use of the tithe or offering once their gift has been made. 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.

SECTION 5.19 COOPERATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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, as long as such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament, or the integrity of the Statement of Faith of our local Church.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the believer should be separated from apostasy as exemplified in ecclesiastical organizations which include radicals, liberals and those who sanction theological compromise. This belief is based upon God's eternal principle of division between truth and error. God's truth is to be practiced with an attitude of devotion to God, humility, compassion, and yet with conviction, to create the proper condition and atmosphere for the main objective, i.e. the salvation of the lost through the gospel of God.

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.

SECTION 5.20 THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a real devil, a created angel, who through pride became the enemy of his creator. This devil is referred to as —Satan, who is called —the god of this age and —the prince of the power of the air, the author of sin and the tempter in the Fall of Man. Satan is full of all subtlety, seeks continually to frustrate the purposes of God and to ensnare the sons of men, and was conquered by Christ on the cross and condemned to everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire. *Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10.*

SECTION 5.21 ANGELS

We believe the Scriptures teach the personal existence of angels who were created by God to bring honor and glory to His name, to serve Him and act as ministering spirits to the saints. Those angels who kept their first estate minister to them who are the heirs of salvation. However, among the angel hosts there were also angels who fell with Satan. Those angels did not keep their first estate and are presently functioning in Satan's counterfeit system as rulers of darkness. Satan and the fallen angels are to be resisted by the believer through the armor provided by God.

Isaiah 6; Matthew 17:18; Ephesians 6:11, 12; Colossians 1:16; 1 Timothy 4:1,2; Hebrews 1:4,14; 1 Peter 1:12; Jude 6

SECTION 5.22 CREATION

We believe the Scriptural account of Genesis teaches that creation is neither an allegory nor a myth, but tells of a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of the Trinity without any evolutionary process. We believe that God created the universe in six literal, twenty-four hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin devised by men who were unwilling to accept the literal, factual account of Scripture.

Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11.

SECTION 5.23 THE CHRISTIAN AND SOCIAL ORDER

We believe the Scriptures teach that all Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in their own lives and in human society. The means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently effective 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, vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. Christians should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. Christians 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.

SECTION 5.24 CIVIL GOVERNMENTS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

We believe the Scriptures teach that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. 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. It is therefore the duty of the state to carry out such actions as capital punishment, taxation and protection of its citizens, etc., as deemed necessary by its constitution which is ultimately to be under biblical authority. 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; Ephesians 5:22-24; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Hebrews 13:17; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

SECTION 5.25 LAWSUITS BETWEEN BELIEVERS

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. Scripture teaches that the church possesses all the resources which are necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. (For greater detail please see our Statement of Conflict Resolution-Policy and Procedures).

1 Corinthians 6:1-6; Ephesians 4:31-32

SECTION 5.26 PEACE AND WAR

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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 in man 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 coming reign of the Prince of Peace.

We believe that this does not minimize or negate the heroism and duty of our enlisted or drafted soldiers, national guardsmen or career servicemen who have served or are currently serving in our armed forces to protect and defend God and America.

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.

SECTION 5.27 THE FAMILY, MARRIAGE, HUMAN SEXUALITY AND ABORTION

We believe the Scriptures teach that 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. We believe the Scriptures teach that Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a lifetime covenant commitment. 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 the procreation of the human race. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by drugs, surgery or appearance.

We believe that marriages between a believer and an unbeliever are forbidden in scripture.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both were 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. The husband 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 itself to the headship of Christ. The wife, also being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband, to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. We believe that marriage is a sacred relationship and honorable for all within the framework of the uniting of one man and one woman. Scripture says —What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Marriage is an earthly symbol of the union of Christ and His Church. We believe that scripture teaches that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends each marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce is regarded as adultery except when (1) a mate enters into an illegitimate covenant by committing sexual immorality with another person. or (2) a Christian is abandoned by a non-Christian. Furthermore, scripture never commends divorce, but allows it; thus, the preferred course of action is the reconciliation of the covenant marriage relationship. The offices of pastor(s), elder(s) and deacons are reserved for those who have never divorced and have not remarried.

We believe the Scriptures teach that Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. We believe that human life begins at conception and that each unborn child is a living human being. Therefore, abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We also believe that the use of aborted fetuses for the purpose of Stem Cell Research is a violation of scripture and the sanctity of human life. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage.

We believe parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them to make choices based on biblical truth; through a consistent lifestyle example and loving/biblical corporal and non-corporal discipline. We affirm the parental right to use discipline to train up their children. However, the Scriptural definition of discipline must be non-abusive, but it can include the proper

use of spanking and that the legal right of parents to administer appropriate discipline must not be abridged by law. Scripture teaches children to honor and obey their parents.

We affirm the parent's legal right of authority over their children, and that the growing governmental intrusion on the parent's authority is to be lamented and resisted whenever necessary. We believe in the parental legal right to direct the religious and moral training of their children, including the choice of each child's school (including the right to home school a child), and that these rights must not be abridged by law.

We believe the parents' responsibility is to be the first teacher of sex education, be it in the home or the church. It is the parents' legal right to know what is being taught to their children in any setting, to control or deny their children's exposure to that teaching when necessary, and these rights must not be abridged by law. We further affirm and believe in the parents' right and need of protection by law to be assured that no sex counseling, contraceptive devices, or abortion-related services will be given to their children by schools or any other organizations without the parent's prior notification and consent.

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; 20:11; 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, 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Galatians 6:7; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 3:12,5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 1:6,2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

SECTION 5.28 SEXUAL IMMORALITY

We believe the Scriptures expressly prohibit homosexual (same sex) practices and homosexual (same sex) marriages because those acts are contrary to Scripture and the intentions of God in His creation.

We believe such relationships are destructive to children and the very idea of a family. Further, we reject transitory, co-habitational, heterosexual relationships as being equally in violation of God's laws and those relationships are equally incapable of providing the long-term nurture and instruction needed by children as commanded by God.

Nonetheless, we believe that those who practice sexual immorality are always capable of being forgiven and should be encouraged to seek biblical and professional counseling for the purposes of being delivered from the choices they have made to willfully sin against God. We believe that all sin is forgivable and that the biblical demand of the church is to seek the repentance, spiritual healing and restoration of those who have practiced all forms of sexual immorality.

In view of this, we believe that the Scripture prohibits anyone engaged in homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, pornography or those living in cohabiting relationships from being a member or leader in this Church, as well as serving in any capacity. Any current member who violates these sexual standards shall be subject to church discipline as outlined in the Church's Constitution and By Laws.

We further affirm that (1) the entire Bible reveals God's condemnation of homosexuality as sin, (2) homosexual behavior is uniformly condemned and (3) nowhere is that behavior commended wherever mentioned in Scriptures. Therefore, we affirm our position opposing homosexuality.

Nonetheless, we must feel compassion and concern for the homosexual as a person while we (1) reject the homosexual lifestyle. We understand that the homosexual lifestyle is incompatible with the Bible and the Christian faith. Therefore, we are opposed to any organization which affirms or in any way promotes or perpetuates the homosexual lifestyle. We strongly support efforts by organizations which lead homosexuals to repentance toward God and growth in faith in Jesus Christ, so that homosexuals may find the wholeness God desires for every person.

Romans 1:18-32; Ephesians 5; Genesis 18 and 19; Leviticus 18:22; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; II Peter 2:6-10

SECTION 5.29 EUTHANASIA

We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until that person's natural death. Thus we believe that an act or omission which, by it or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. However, God has granted all of us His Word to guide and direct us to discern His Will. Therefore, the Church affirms the right of each individual to refuse or discontinue medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome because such actions can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment. *Ex. 20:13, 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28*

SECTION 5.30 LOVE

We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those (1) who are not believers, (2) those who oppose us, and (3) those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means to resolve personal conflicts or obtain personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in any sinful actions.

Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18

SECTION 5.31 AUTHORITY OF THE STATEMENT OF FAITH

This Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the only inerrant and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents our understanding of the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, is the standard by which all members should live.

Colossians 1:10

ARTICLE VI: AFFILIATION

SECTION 6.01 ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER CHURCHES

Our Church is entirely autonomous and has the sole right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. Local churches can seek to fellowship voluntarily with other doctrinally sound churches. This association is to provide help and encouragement while working together as the Lord directs. This is a voluntary association that in no way involves the surrender of any of the individual church's freedom or dependence upon God.

SECTION 6.02 ASSOCIATION WITH CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

Through the years, our Church has associated with other Christian ministries. However, our Church only maintains affiliations with churches and organizations that are biblically sound both in doctrine and practice.

SECTION 6.03 ASSOCIATION WITH THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

The Church currently maintains fellowship with the Scioto Valley Association, The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio and the Southern Baptist Convention because we believe that it is God's will for us to do so. Fundamental to our affiliation is our understanding that the Southern Baptist Convention is a fellowship of autonomous, biblically sound churches that choose to work together to further God's Kingdom. Our Church and other churches make voluntary contributions to Southern Baptist local, state, national and foreign mission projects to maintain this affiliation. Support may also be provided by sending messengers to the annual convention for voting on doctrinal, ethical, and procedural positions. Members of our Church may desire to become personally involved in Southern Baptist evangelism, education, and mission work.

ARTICLE VII: MEMBERSHIP AND GENERAL CHURCH ATTENDANCE

SECTION 7.01 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, after committing themselves to the Lord, identified themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body. See Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Philippians 1:1; Acts 11:26 In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ, as defined in the New Testament and practiced by the early churches, the Church recognizes the need for formal membership. Membership in this Church shall consist of all persons who have met the qualifications for membership and are listed on the membership role. Membership in this body is a privilege, not a right, which carries with it specific responsibilities and moral obligations.

SECTION 7.02 CANDIDACY AND MEMBERSHIP

Any person who (1) has personally received Christ as their Savior and Lord, (2) has been baptized by immersion as a testimony of their salvation, and (3) desires to be committed to the Church as a local body of believers, may become a member of the Church through the following procedures:

Step 1 Approach a staff member, deacon or other duly appointed ministry leader, and come forward during one of the worship service altar calls to share your desire to join the Church. Prospective members may present themselves on one of the following four bases:

1. Upon public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, after baptism by immersion.
2. By letter from some other church of like faith and order.
3. Upon statement of Christian experience, if previously baptized by immersion.
4. By restoration see **Section 7.08**

Step 2 Satisfactory Completion of the Church's The Discovery Classes. The Discovery Classes shall be offered (periodically) to provide, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Overview of Doctrinal Statement in this Constitution and By Laws and the Organizational and Policies and Procedures Manuals of the Church
2. Introduction of Deacons and ministerial staff
3. The history of this Church
4. This Church's Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By-laws
5. Overview of ministries and insights from selected ministry leaders
6. Spiritual gift studies
7. General Operating Budget
8. Leadership and membership responsibilities

Note: If these classes are not offered on a timely basis a candidate can proceed to membership but they must agree to attend the next regularly scheduled Discovery Class when it is offered. These classes will be made available for home study if attendance at the live classes is not possible.

Step 3 Complete a personal profile and a written testimony of their salvation experience and return them to the Church's office.

Step 4 Personal Interview: Following attendance at the Discovery Classes (if offered on a timely basis), individuals desiring membership shall meet with a team of two Pastoral Staff members, Deacons or appointed ministry leaders to verbalize their personal testimony, and to allow the Church to determine the integrity of that individual's faith and their desire to be committed to the Church as their local body of believers.

Step 5 The proposed Member's Statement of Commitment and Acknowledgement and Commitment to our Church. Each proposed member of the Church shall sign a Statement of Commitment and Acknowledgement. This shall be the instrument that affirms one's desire for membership. These shall indicate that the proposed member agrees with the Church's Statement of Faith. These will also serve as the formal record of the proposed member's membership after their approval of the congregation.

Step 6 Upon the completion of steps 1 through 5 each membership candidate will be presented for membership upon a recommendation of the Pastoral Staff and Deacon Fellowship at a regular or

special business meeting to be voted upon as a new member.

The names of all such membership candidates which are approved at a regular or special business meeting shall be added to the Church's membership roll.

SECTION 7.03 DESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

In an effort properly to reflect the membership of the Church, three separate membership rolls shall be maintained. These rolls shall be updated periodically. The designation of which roll a member's name is to be listed upon is the sole responsibility of the Deacons and Senior Pastoral Staff.

1. **Active/Resident Members:** All members who reside within the Church's ministry area and are currently active in the Church. (This designation shall include those who are Home Bound or in Nursing Home Care)

2. **Watch Care Members:** Members who are active military or out of state residents for extended periods of time.

3. **Inactive Members:** Members who reside within the Church's ministry area and who fail to be faithful in attending, giving and serving on a regular basis for a period of one year (as determined by annual review of the Deacon Fellowship) unless their attendance is prevented by unavoidable circumstances will be placed on the inactive members roll.

SECTION 7.04 MEMBERSHIP COVENANT/DUTIES

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

We pledge, 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 give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations.

We also pledge to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, exemplary in our deportment and zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ

We pledge to refrain from using our bodies in any way that might grieve the Holy Spirit, tarnish our personal Christian testimony, bring a reproach upon this local Church or the body of Christ by: avoiding the use of our tongue for gossiping, complaining and backbiting; refraining from excessive anger; striving to maintain sexual purity in thought and action; and abstaining from any ungodly activities and the use of alcohol as a beverage or any other intoxicating/addictive substance that will harm our body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

We further pledge 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 reconciliation without delay.

We moreover pledge that when we remove from this Church or area, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of the Lord's covenant and the principles of God's word.

To these and all other Christian duties we do humbly and cheerfully submit ourselves, promising to perform them not in our own strength, being aware of our weakness, but in the strength of the Lord, whose we are, who we serve and to whom be glory in the Christ's Church through all ages, world without end. Amen.

SECTION 7.05 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Each member will be asked annually to reaffirm their commitment to membership. This can be accomplished by attending our annual member reaffirmation service or by returning the commitment form to the Church office. Hebrews 3:13 and 10:25 gives us a clear commandment to exhort one another through the assembly of the local body. This recommitment shall include a brief description of how each member is involved in the life of the Church by:

1. The reaffirmation of one's commitment to the Doctrinal Statement, the Church's Statement of Faith, Articles of Incorporation, and the Constitution and By Laws.
2. The description of how one is continuing to nurture his or her personal walk with Christ.
3. The reaffirmation of one's commitment to regular participation in corporate worship and fellowship of the Church.
4. A description of how one is being a steward of his or her spiritual gifts, natural abilities, talents, and material resources to bring the greatest glory to God and the most benefit God's people.

SECTION 7.06 PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Every Active/Resident Member 18 years of age and older (except those members who are then undergoing the process of Church discipline), shall have the right to cast one vote on the following matters:

- (1) Adoption of the annual General Operating Budget of the Church.
- (2) Election of deacons and other leadership as so directed by the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By Laws, and existing the Organizational and Policies and Procedures Manuals.
- (3) Acquisition of real property.
- (4) Disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church.
- (5) Merger or dissolution of the Church.
- (6) Obtaining of any indebtedness
- (7) Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and/or the Constitution and By Laws of the Church.
- (8) Calling or removing of the Senior Minister.
- (9) Other matters in which the Pastoral Staff or the Deacon Fellowship decides to seek the membership's advice and counsel.

See also Article IX. Note: Voting by proxy is prohibited. (Only members who are present at a meeting can vote).

2. Ohio law invests in the members of the Congregation the authority to govern the church. However, this congregation functions primarily under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the direction of the Senior Pastor as the Lord's under shepherd with the advice and counsel of the Deacon Fellowship. Determinations of the internal affairs of this Church which are ecclesiastical matters in nature shall be determined exclusively by the Church's own rules and procedures. The Pastoral Staff shall oversee and/or conduct all ministries of this Church. The Deacon Fellowship shall give counsel and assistance to the Pastoral Staff as requested by them or as deemed appropriate by the Deacon Fellowship.

3. Membership in this Church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based upon the principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the Church's worship services, the Church's property remains private property. The Pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the Fellowship of Deacons) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain upon the Church's property. If, after being notified of such a suspension or revocation of the right of a person to be on the Church's property, the person enters or remains on church property, the Senior Pastor and/or the Deacon Fellowship shall do what they deem necessary to restore order to the worship service or meeting.

4. A member, upon five-business days prior written request to the Church, may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the Church, the minutes of the proceedings of Church meetings, and

the minutes of the proceedings of board meetings.

5. Members may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to any other individual's contributions to the Church, the list of names and addresses (unless given by permission for an approved ministry mailing or as authorized by an order of a Court) of the Church members, or the accounting books and financial records of the Church which would disclose salary or benefit information for any employee; provided, however, that the total giving during each week broken down by categories, such as, but not limited to Current Budget, Building Fund, Missionary Gifts, and any current designated funds shall be disclosed weekly whether the gift was through the offering plates, the mail or even an electronic gift.

6. All members may participate in the Lord's Supper ordinance of the Church which is administered by the Church. (Note: participation in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is not limited to members, we observe open communion for anyone who testifies that they have a personal relationship with Christ). However, all who participate in the communion ordinance are admonished to remember the need to enter into a personal examination before participation in the Lord's Supper. (I Corinthians 11:23-30)

SECTION 7.07 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Members shall be removed from the Church roll for the following reasons:

1. Death
2. Transfer of their membership to another church. Upon written request from some other Church of like faith and order, a statement of Christian standing and/or Church membership shall be granted for members and sent to the member's new church, pursuant to a recommendation from the Fellowship of Deacons and the vote of the Church.
3. By the personal request of the member.
4. The Deacon Fellowship and/or Pastoral Staff may investigate, and if they are satisfied that a member cannot be reclaimed, they shall present to the Church a recommendation that the member's name be removed from the membership roll, the removal shall be pursuant to a vote of the Church at a business meeting.
5. Dismissal by the Church following an investigation by the Deacon Fellowship and Pastoral Staff if a member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the Church Membership Covenant and/or is in express disagreement with our Statement of Faith and is such that the continued membership of the member hinders the ministry influence of the Church in the community.

SECTION 7.08 DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS (See also Conflict Resolution in Policy and Procedure)

There shall be a standing Discipline Committee consisting of the Pastor and the Deacon Fellowship. These men shall have sole authority in determining if a member or attender of the Church has deviated from the Church's Statement of Faith. If the Pastor or a member of the Deacon Fellowship is the subject of a disciplinary investigation, he shall not sit as a member of the discipline committee; provided, however that the Pastor and/or Deacon shall be entitled to the same steps as any other church members and be subject to the same discipline.

Purpose: The purpose of Church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining

1. Purity in the Church (1 Corinthians 5:6).
2. Protecting believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20).
3. Promoting the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to the biblical standards of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1). Furthermore, upon joining this Church, all members must be in agreement with the Church's policy in regards to Conflict Resolution and Church Discipline and are bound by that agreement.

Process: Members and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship at the Church who err in biblical doctrine or conduct are subject to discipline according to Matthew 18:15-18. (Such persons hereafter will be referred to as an —Erring Person.) Before such discipline reaches its final conclusion:

1. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a

member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders their own or another's spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go **alone** to the Erring Person and seek to restore his brother. That person shall be referred to as the —Warning Person. Before the Warning Person goes to the Erring Person, he must first examine himself. When he goes, he should go in a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoring the brother. If the Erring Person does not heed this individual's warning; then,

2. The Warning Person shall again go to the Erring Person accompanied by a second or a second and third person, seeking to resolve the matter. This second step must also be preceded by self-examination by all attendees and still be exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration. If the Erring Person still refuses to heed this warning; then,

3. It shall be brought to the attention of the Pastoral Staff and/or Deacon Fellowship. (It is understood that this process will thereafter continue to its conclusion, whether the Erring Person leaves the Church or otherwise seeks to withdraw their membership from the Church to avoid the discipline process.) The Deacon Fellowship and Pastoral Staff will appropriately investigate any allegation brought by one Church member against another. If these allegations are considered to be sufficient, two or more of the Deacons and/or Pastoral Staff will contact the Erring Person and seek his or her repentance and restoration. If the Erring Person refuses to be restored, the matter will be presented to the entire congregation, who will act to protect the Church by removing the Erring Person's membership and notifying the Church in accordance with Matthew 18. However, even at and after this point, the Church will and must continue to pray for the restoration of the Erring Person to fellowship with the Church.

4. Anyone undergoing the process of Church discipline will be asked to step aside from all ministry leadership positions held by that person until the conclusion of the process. Restoration to any positions of authority and leadership will be at the discretion of the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship and/or the congregation at the end of the process.

Reinstatement: If such dismissed member heeds the warning that resulted in their removal, demonstrates repentance, and, thereafter, requests reinstatement of their membership, he or she may be publicly restored to membership through the vote of the congregation at any business meeting.

SECTION 7.09 GENERAL CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Attendance in the general worship services of this Church shall be open to the general public subject to the standards and expectations contained in this Constitution and ByLaws.

In all services and programs of this ministry, reasonable standards of decorum and order shall be maintained at all times. As such, no one shall, by appearance or behavior, be permitted to draw attention to themselves in contravention of the ministry's purposes. Any individual who, in the sole discretion of the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship or ministry leadership, is found to be in violation of this policy may be asked to leave the ministry premises immediately. In addition, the Senior Pastor and/or the Deacon Fellowship shall do what they deem necessary to restore order to the worship service or meeting.

Where appropriate, the Pastoral Staff and Deacon Fellowship, at their discretion, may designate specific assignments and qualifications for various special classes or group activities. Such assignments and qualifications shall be enforced for all individuals who wish to attend the ministry function. Individuals who do not meet the qualifications for a specific class or activity, in the sole discretion of the Pastor Staff and Deacon Fellowship, shall not be allowed to participate in the designated activity.

Article VIII: ARBITRATION

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, members of this Church are admonished to attempt to submit any dispute with another Christian to binding arbitration in any matters which cannot be resolved by discussions between the parties. If any binding arbitration results in a judgment in favor of either and the arbitration award is not voluntarily paid by the other party, the winning party may seek to enforce the arbitration award using any court having jurisdiction thereof.

Article IX: MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

SECTION 9.01 PLACE OF MEETINGS

Meetings of the members shall be held at a building on the Church property or at such other place or places within or outside Ohio as may be designated from time to time by the Fellowship of Deacons or Pastoral Staff.

SECTION 9.02 CORPORATE WORSHIP

This Church shall meet together for corporate public worship every Sunday morning. The Church shall meet for the bimonthly observance of the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday or at such other times as decided by the Pastor and Fellowship of Deacons. There shall be a prayer and Bible study service each Wednesday evening. Sunday School (Bible Study Fellowship Groups) shall meet each Sunday prior to or following corporate public worship. Regular Youth Bible Study meetings and Children's Bible study meetings will also meet as so designated and approved by the Pastoral Staff and the Deacon Fellowship. No meeting of any organization or Ministry Team of the Church shall be held at a time that is in conflict with any of the regular services of the Church.

SECTION 9.03 QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETINGS

The regular quarterly business meetings of the Church shall be held on the second Sunday evening of each quarter. The action to adopt the Church's budget, elect officers and select the Ministry Team Leaders shall take place at the fall quarterly meeting. The action to select Sunday School leadership shall take place at the July quarterly business meeting.

The General Order Shall Be As Follows:

1. Prayer
2. Biblical Instruction
3. Reading of Minutes
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Reports from Deacons, Trustees and Ministry Counsel
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Adjournment of Meeting

SECTION 9.04 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

This meeting shall be held under the same specifications as that of the quarterly business meeting, and be at the beginning of each new calendar year on the second Sunday evening of January.

SECTION 9.05 SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Special Meetings may be called at any time by the Senior Pastor, Deacon Fellowship, or Trustees for any purpose by giving notice to the members in accordance with Section 9.06 of this Article. In addition, a special meeting shall be called upon the petition of at least twenty-five of the Members.

SECTION 9.06 NOTICE REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

General Requirements Whenever members are required or permitted to take any action at a meeting, notice of the action to be taken shall be given to members no less than two (2) Sundays prior to a meeting. Notification of membership meetings shall be given by:

1. Distribution of written material to the congregation in attendance at a regular weekend worship service together with a public announcement from the pulpit.
2. By any other means necessary to adequately communicate notice of member meeting.
3. No business is to ever be conducted during a regularly scheduled Sunday Morning worship service.

Notice of Certain Agenda Items Action by the members on any of the following proposals is valid only if the notice or waiver of notice specifies the general nature of the proposal:

1. Selection, rebuke, or dismissal of the Senior Minister.
2. Amending the Articles of Incorporation.
3. Adopting, amending or repealing the Constitution and By Laws.
4. Disposing of all or substantially all of the Church's assets.
5. Approving the acquisition or sale of real property
6. The entering into of any indebtedness.
7. Approving the determination to dissolve the Church.

SECTION 9.07 QUORUM

A minimum of forty (40) active voting members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

SECTION 9.08 VOTING

1. Church action for general matters shall be by concurrence of a majority of members present at the meeting and voting,
2. Church action for the following matters shall require an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those present at the meeting and voting:
 - (a) The calling or removal of the Senior Pastor,
 - (b) The amending of the Articles of Incorporation or the Constitution and By Laws, and
 - (c) The determination to borrow money.
3. All voting shall be by those physically present at the Church meeting at which a vote is taken and no proxy votes shall be allowed.
4. All matters shall be voted on only by members in good standing who are eighteen years of age or older and not then the subject of a Church discipline matter.

If requested in writing, members may attend a meeting by being physically present in any of the Church's facilities. Or attendance via a recorded conference call provisions for members wanting to participate who cannot come to the church building because of medical reasons.

SECTION 9.09 RULES OF ORDER

As a general guideline, except where this Constitution and By Laws state otherwise, *Robert's Rules of Order* Newly Revised 10th Edition (2000) shall be the accepted pattern for the transaction of all Church business.

While Robert's Rules of Order are our general guideline for the transaction of Church business, they are not a replacement for the Word of God and practical common sense in church matters, as we are a body of believers and not a parliamentary body. All things are to be done decently and in order. (I Corinthians 14:40)

The Moderator for all Church meetings shall be the Senior Pastor. In the absence of the Senior Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacon Fellowship will serve as the Moderator. The Senior Pastor may also, at his discretion, step aside as Moderator (temporarily appointing the Chairman of the Deacon Fellowship or the Chairman of Trustees as Moderator) during the meeting's discussion to speak on a matter and interject his personal views. The Moderator shall be informed in advance of all items of business to be presented at any business meeting.

For any meeting under this article, the Moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full authority to require nonmembers to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings. The Moderator shall have full authority to order the removal of all children below the age determined by the Moderator and/or the Deacon Fellowship to be appropriate if it is determined that circumstances so warrant. If the Moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, the Moderator may, in his sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises in accordance with **Section 7.06(3)**. The Senior Pastor and/or the Deacon Fellowship shall do what they deem necessary to restore order to the worship service or meeting.

Church meetings are open to any active Church member in good standing who desires to attend.

Visitors and nonmembers will be dismissed before meetings commence, if their dismissal is deemed

to be necessary by the Moderator. Visitors and nonmembers who are permitted to remain during any business proceeding of the Church must refrain from any open discussion and or votes taken. Failure for any visitor or nonmember to comply will result in the Moderator giving an order for the removal of the visitor or nonmember.

The Corporate Secretary/Clerk will be responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting. The minutes shall include who presided as Moderator over the meeting; the finding of or absence of a quorum of members and a summary of actions taken at the meeting, if any, but in sufficient detail to clearly describe what was discussed and agreed upon in order to avoid any subsequent disputes.

ARTICLE X: CHURCH OFFICERS AND LEADERSHIP

SECTION 10.01 CHURCH OFFICERS

The Church officers are the Senior Pastor, Deacons, Trustees, Clerk and their Assistant, and Financial Officer and their Assistant. The Pastoral Staff and Deacons may from time to time as they deem appropriate, appoint other Church officers subject to a confirmation vote of the Church membership after the amendment of this Constitution and By Laws.

SECTION 10.02 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP

The Pastoral Staff in conjunction with the Deacon Fellowship, and Trustees has final authority over all matters of the Church. The Senior Pastor has responsibility over all paid staff of the Church as well as the daily operations of the ministry. Deacons will assist the Pastoral Staff in meeting ministry and administrative needs of the Church as they arise. The Trustees will oversee legal and financial matters and provide for the care and maintenance of all properties owned by the Church. Committees and Ministry Teams will be established to perform works of administration or ministry as outlined in their specific Position Descriptions. All officers, staff, committee members and ministry leaders will be presented with a detailed job description that can be found in the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals. .

SECTION 10.03 GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Any and all leadership; pastoral staff, support staff, appointed ministry leaders, officers committee members and any designation so given as a position of leadership must at a minimum meet the following qualifications: **(See Also Article XV, Section 15.01)**

1. Be a member of the Church, having given a clear testimony of personal faith in Jesus Christ and demonstrating a life in submission to His Lordship.
2. Be personally committed to maintaining a moral and spiritual lifestyle as set forth in Scripture.
3. Believe and uphold the doctrines as stated in the Scriptures and the Church's Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By Laws.
4. Be willing to work in harmony with the deacons, ministers, support staff, and fellow ministry leaders.
5. Be supportive the ministry and leadership of Ebenezer Baptist Church through prayer and attendance.
6. Be involved in the regular study of God's Word.
7. Be financially invested and supportive of the work of Christ here at the Church, giving from the first fruits of all their increases on the first day of the week.
8. Must know their spiritual gift and strive to use it effectively within the Church.
9. Manifest a heart and ministry passion in the area of ministry in which they serve.
10. Attend the necessary regularly scheduled leadership meetings that affect their area of ministry.

SECTION 10.04 DESIGNATIONS OF CORPORATE OFFICERS

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the Church, the Chairman of the Trustees shall serve as President of the corporation; the Clerk shall serve as Secretary of the corporation; and the staff Financial Officer shall serve as Treasurer of the corporation.

SECTION 10.05 ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICES AND LEADERSHIP

1. The Church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith.
2. All Church officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the Senior Pastoral staff in order for them to commence or continue in their offices.
3. Only Church members in good standing are eligible for election or appointment to any Church office or position. Careful prayer and consideration must be given by the Nominating Committee, Pastoral Staff and the Church when electing officers and when appointing general leadership and committee members.
4. Any member of the Church that desires to serve in an office of the Church or serve in a ministry leadership or teaching position must have been a member in good standing for a minimum of six months, unless this document otherwise specifies or unless the person with a shorter membership secures the approval of the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, and the Church's congregation and is approved in a meeting and recorded in the minutes.

SECTION 10.06 GENERAL TERMS OF OFFICE (PASTOR, OFFICERS AND MINISTRY LEADERSHIP)

1. The relationship between the Senior Pastor and the Church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice at which time can be reduced by mutual consent. The calling of a Senior Pastor or the severance of the relationship between the Senior Pastor and the Church may be considered at any Church business meeting, provided notice to that effect shall have been given from the pulpit to the Church on the two Sundays prior to said regular or special Church business meeting. A two-thirds majority of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to call a Senior Pastor or to sever the relationship between the Senior Pastor and the Church. The disciplinary removal of the Senior Pastor by the Church from office shall automatically terminate the Senior Pastor's membership.
2. The term of service for all offices and leadership positions in the Church; except the Pastor(s), Deacons, Trustees and Church Treasurer (or staff Financial Officer) and all other paid staff; shall be one year, at the expiration of which they may be re-elected or re-appointed. The office of Deacon and Trustee shall not be held concurrently by the same person. Deacons and Trustees shall be elected for a three year term, and they may not serve more than two consecutive terms without being off that Board for one year before serving again on the same Board. The Financial Officer is a paid staff position and hired by our trustees. The Financial Officer position shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or shorter if the reduced period is agreed to by mutual consent. Any exceptions to terms of service must be so designated in the Constitution and By Laws or be approved by the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, and be presented to the Church body for approval of the exception.
3. A vacancy occurring in any office, except in the case of the Senior Pastor may be filled at any regular Church business meeting. (The provisions for the hiring of paid staff members; pastoral or other; will be expounded upon in the personnel section of the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals. The hiring and dismissal of all paid staff members is a shared responsibility of the Senior Pastor, Deacon Fellowship, Trustees and the Church body.)
4. All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed. Any elected or appointed official of the Church who fails to perform the duties of his office for a period of three months, unless because of illness or some other unavoidable reason, shall forfeit their office and the Church shall proceed to fill the same office at the next meeting.

5. All officers, staff and leadership may be removed from service for unbiblical conduct, as determined by the provisions of **Section 7.08**.

SECTION 10.07 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The annual election of most officers by the Church's membership shall occur during the month of October, when the Nominating Committee shall present the slate of officers for approval. All officers elected in October shall serve during the following calendar year (January 1 to December 31), unless otherwise specified.

SECTION 10.08 OVERSIGHT OF OFFICERS, STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

1. Subject to the approval of the Church's membership, consultation with the Deacon Fellowship and Trustees and on the condition that they shall become a member of the Church upon assuming their duties, the Pastor may hire associate and/or assistant Pastors to assist in carrying out his God-given responsibilities.

2. All Church officers, staff and leadership whether paid or volunteer, shall be under the supervision of the Pastor and Deacon Fellowship. While Scripture indicates that the Pastors and the Deacon Fellowship bear the ultimate responsibility for the watch care of the Church, Scripture does allow for the delegation of responsibilities. The Trustees and are to give oversight to certain ministry and leadership positions as so assigned by the Pastor and Deacon Fellowship. No employee or volunteer shall be hired, appointed, or retained who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith.

SECTION 10.09 HIRING PRACTICES OF STAFF

All paid staff members will be subject to the hiring practices as outlined in the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals. The Deacon Fellowship, Trustees and Pastoral Staff shall give oversight to all hiring practices. Pastoral Staff members and support staff will be hired by the Senior Pastor in conjunction with the Trustees and Deacon Fellowship and subject to the approval of the Church body through its budgetary authorization.

SECTION 10.10 RESIGNATION FROM OFFICE OR LEADERSHIP

Any resignation from any office of the Church or from any leadership position should be submitted in writing to the Senior Pastor, Deacon Fellowship, Trustees, and the Nominating Committee.

SECTION 10.11 JUNIOR LEADERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

It is the desire of the Church to train future leaders for service in the local Churches. In order to allow for periods of training and instruction, Junior Leadership positions within the Church body are open for members of the Church 16 years and older. All Junior Leadership position must be approved by the Pastoral Staff, and the Deacon Fellowship. Junior Leaders must have exemplified above average maturity both in their attitude and spiritual walk. Recommendations of a person for Junior Leadership for service can be brought to the attention of any Pastoral Staff member or a Deacon for consideration. Examples of Junior Leadership are but not exclusive of the following: Children's Teacher Assistant or Aide, Children's Ministry Assistant, Adult Choir Member, Usher, assisting the Worship Team, Pastoral or Secretarial Staff etc.

Article XI: DUTIES AND POWERS OF CHURCH OFFICERS AND LEADERSHIP

SECTION 11.01 PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

"Paul and Barnabas appointed elders (pastors) for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust."

(Acts 14:23)

"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (pastors). Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood."

(Acts 20:28)

"The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders (pastors) in every town, as I directed you."

(Titus 1:5)

The New Testament clearly teaches that the Church is to be led by godly men. Their assignment falls into four categories: First, these men are given both the responsibility and authority to skillfully and lovingly **lead** the flock. Next, they are to **feed** the flock, offering accurate and insightful teaching of the Scripture. Third, they are to **care** for the flock. This care is shown in the love, concern, prayers, ministry, and adept management of the Church's resources. Finally, they are to **protect** the flock from harmful influences and beliefs.

These leaders are known by three titles, each of which reveals a separate aspect of their function. All three titles are used in 1 Peter 5:1-2;

—To the **elders** among you, I appeal as a fellow **elder**, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be **shepherds** of God's flock that is under your care, serving as **overseers** - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;"

They are first called —**elders**. An elder (Greek —presbuteros) is a godly leader whose wisdom and maturity are respected by God's people. Next, these are men who give oversight to the church. That is, they are —**overseers** (Greek —episkapos). An overseer is a person who is a good manager of resources and a guardian of the people. Finally, these leaders are called —**shepherds**, which is also translated as —ministers (Greek poimain). This word refers to the role of caring for and leading the flock.

It is important to note that within the New Testament model of church organization, authority for leadership is not granted to just one individual minister. Instead, the Scripture states that authority for leadership is conducted by godly leaders who are appointed by the church and accountable to God.

The Scripture further teaches that when the church supports the Pastor (elders), both the church body and individual Christians will flourish. (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Pet. 5:1-5; Acts 20:28)

These Pastor (elders) do not form a separated —clergy class of Christians. Instead, the Pastor (elders), some of whom fill Church vocational roles or other non-vocational roles, are brothers with the people, always seeking God's best for the members of the church. (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; 2 Cor. 8:19)

SECTION 11.02 GENERAL SCOPE OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

The Church seeks to be a New Testament Church committed to the teachings of the Bible. No other authority or tradition is to guide the means, faith, or structure of the Lord Jesus Christ's Church. The ministerial and administrative structure for a New Testament church is to utilize godly leadership. This Church will follow this scriptural example.

Selection of the Pastoral Staff will be based on biblical directives such as: character (1 Tim. 3:1-10), giftedness (1 Cor. 12:12-31), function (Romans 12:3-8) and results (Eph. 4:11-16). Pastors must be publicly installed into office (1 Tim. 5:22; Acts 14:23). They must be motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do their works of ministry (Acts 20:28). To effectively perform their duties, the Pastors need the prayers, support (1 Tim. 5:17-18) and assent of the members of the Church (Heb. 13:17). The Church is called upon to honor their Pastors and to protect them against false accusations

(1 Tim. 5:19). Finally, if a Pastor falls into sin, and continues in sin, he must be publicly rebuked and, possibly, removed from being a Pastor or Church Member. (1 Tim. 5:20)

All Pastoral Staff will act in an administrative role, giving oversight to all ministries, but not to the exclusion of lay leadership. The Pastors are the Administrators of the Laity (Members of the Church) who function as the ministers of the gospel under the direction of the Pastors. This cooperative effort does not undermine pastoral authority or elevate the pastors to a hierarchy that belongs only to Christ as head of the church. See Section 5.09

SECTION 11.03 QUALIFICATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

"An overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, and free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping children under control with all dignity...and not a new convert, he must have a good reputation with those outside the Church, so he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." I Tim. 3:2-7 37

"If a man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion...above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word...that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict." Titus 1:6-9

Above Reproach Pastors must be blameless, presenting no pattern of Scriptural disobedience or grounds for accusation.

Husband of One Wife Pastors, if married, must be devoted to their wife having never been divorced.

Temperate Pastors must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.

Prudent Pastors must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.

Respectable Pastors must demonstrate a well-ordered life and good behavior.

Hospitable Pastors must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.

Able to Teach Pastors must be able to communicate the truth of God and exhort sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way. (II Tim. 2:24 & 4:2)

Not Addicted to Wine Pastors must be free from addictions, and must be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others. (Total abstinence is what the actual Greek states and should be the only accepted practice for a Pastor).

Not Pugnacious Pastors must be gentle and characterized by forbearance and tenderness - not having a quick temper.

Not Contentious Pastors must not be given to quarrelling or selfish argumentation.

Free From the Love of Money Pastors must not be stingy, greedy or out for sordid gain. They should not be preoccupied with amassing material things, but rather should be a model of giving.

Manage Own Household Pastors must have a well-ordered household, a healthy family life, and well-behaved children.

Not a New Convert Pastors must not be new believers. They must have been Christians for long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and the depth of their spirituality.

Good Reputation with Outsiders Pastors must be well respected by unbelievers and the community at large and must be free from hypocrisy.

Not Self-Willed Pastors must not be stubborn, insensitive or prone to force opinions on others. They must be more interested in service than self-pleasure.

Not Quick Tempered Pastors must be able to exercise self-control and patience in difficult situations.

Loves what is Good Pastors must desire the will of God in every decision.

Just Pastors must be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on Scriptural principles.

Devout Pastors must be reverent, continually desiring to be separated from sin. They must be devoted to prayer, the study of Scripture and the guarding of their own spiritual walk. (Acts 20:28)

Holding Fast the Faithful Word Pastors must be stable in the faith, obedient to the word of God,

continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

SECTION 11.04 SENIOR PASTOR DUTIES

It is the Senior Pastor's duty to exercise personal holiness. The Senior Pastors shall oversee, lead, shepherd, and care for the spiritual condition of the Church, as set forth in Scripture (I Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9; I Peter 5:1-2). This is to be done in conjunction with the Deacon Fellowship, the entire pastoral staff and other designated ministry leaders.

Specific List of Responsibilities:

1. Shepherd the Flock. Serving in all humility, Pastors are to guide, direct, guard and protect the members of the body, seeking to meet the flock's needs and assist in any way possible, warning against harmful influences and guarding against false teachers. (Acts 20:35)
2. Lead Through Example. Pastors are to provide a Scriptural role model and are to set a pattern before the flock of a rightly ordered life - with a single purpose, to glorify God. (1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17)
3. Teach and Exhort. Pastors are to see that the flock is fed through insightful and accurate Biblical instruction and admonition. Teaching will be centered on equipping the members of the body to perform the works of ministry. (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9-16; John 21:17)
4. Refute Those Who Contradict Truth. Pastors are to confront those who are teaching what they should not teach or who are continuing in a pattern of behavior contradictory to Biblical truth. Thus, Pastors are to keep closing potential entrances for Satan, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community. (Acts 20:17, 28-31; 1 Thess. 5:12)
5. Manage the Church of God. Pastors are to oversee the life of the Church, with the assistance of other godly leaders. They must be people who can "rule well". Qualified deacons are to be selected to assist the Pastors in the management and ministry of the Church. (1 Timothy 5:17)
6. Pray for the Sick. Pastors are to pray for the spiritual and physical well being of members of the congregation. (James 5:14-15)

In addition to his ministering role as Pastor (elder), the Senior Minister is primarily to be a teacher of the Word of God — the Bible. He is to teach and exhort by precept and example. His goal is to help mature believers through insightful and accurate presentation and proclamation of the Word, equipping them to effectively perform works of ministries within the Body of Christ.

The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and ministry teams, and his leadership shall be recognized in all of the committees and teams. The Deacon Fellowship will prepare a Position Description for the Senior Minister, which outlines more specific responsibilities and duties.

SECTION 11.05 CALLING OF THE SENIOR PASTOR

A Senior Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a Church business meeting called specifically for that purpose with the requisite vote in favor of the call – see **Section 9.08**.

SECTION 11.06 SENIOR PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

When a vacancy in the Senior Pastor position exists, a Pastoral Search Committee shall be established with Church membership approval. The Pastoral Search Committee will be responsible for screening all resumes, interviewing applicants, and confirming the qualifications and experience of the top candidates. The Deacon Fellowship will be consulted during the search process. The recommendation of the Pastoral Search Committee will constitute a nomination which requires a second during the business meeting.

The Pastoral Search Committee will be comprised of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Deacon Fellowship, the Chairman of the Trustees, and three (3) at large members elected by the Church in a specially called Church business meeting. Two (2) at large alternates will also be chosen in case a vacancy occurs for any reason during the search process.

This committee shall confer with the Associational Missionary of the Scioto Valley Association of the Southern Baptist Convention to learn about available men and for recommendations of the same.

No minister candidate shall be presented to the Church for consideration unless recommended by affirmative vote of four-fifths vote of this committee. Only one candidate at a time shall be presented to the church for approval. The call of a Senior Pastor shall be brought before the church either at a regular or duly announced special business meeting called for this purpose. The vote shall be by a written ballot with a two-thirds majority vote of those eligible members present required for passage. It shall also be the duty of the pulpit committee during any pastor-less period to fill the pulpit for the regularly scheduled services of the church, with a qualified layman or pastor, or if possible secure an interim pastor with the consent of the entire Deacon Fellowship. They shall have full authority regarding securing and fixing compensation for such laymen, pastors or interims during this period. Before the Senior Pastor is called the provisions of the annual evaluation process for the Senior Pastor shall be provided, in writing, to the proposed Senior Pastor. Thereafter, that process is to be used to evaluate the Senior Pastor annually by the Deacon Fellowship. That process will also identify specific ministry objectives for the Church and detail information related to compensation, fringe benefits, authority and responsibility. It is the responsibility of the Search Committee to negotiate all details of compensation and fringe benefits. It is the responsibility of the Deacon Fellowship to provide for the search committee a detailed job description for the position of Senior Pastor. It is the responsibility of the Trustees to provide the necessary financial and budgetary guidelines to the Pastor Search Committee.

SECTION 11.07 OTHER PASTORAL STAFF

Pastors (excluding the Senior Pastor) are called to serve by the recommendation from the Pastor and the Deacon Fellowship, and are empowered to assist the Senior Pastor in running the day-to-day ministry operations of the Church. Pastors can act individually to enter into transactions regarding their specific area of ministry, conditioned upon budgetary constraints, but they are subject to the oversight and authorization levels given by the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Fellowship. If a Pastor exceeds his authorization level in a church transaction, the Pastor may be held personally responsible for any obligations incurred as a result. The Senior Pastor is responsible, and will be held accountable to the Deacon Fellowship, for the oversight of all ministerial staff of the Church. Position Descriptions shall be written by the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Fellowship when the need for another pastoral staff member is determined. All Pastoral Staff members will be required to meet pastoral qualifications, regardless of their specific area of ministry. When a Pastoral position (other than the Senior Pastor) is to be established or filled, a Pastoral Search Committee shall be established consisting of the Senior Pastor and the members of the Deacon Fellowship. New ministerial staff positions will be formally introduced to the membership of the Church and voted upon for approval by the church body at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting.

SECTION 11.08 SUPPORT STAFF AND PERSONNEL

The oversight of support staff members will be performed by the Senior Pastor and Fellowship of Deacons. Guidelines for the hiring and termination of support staff positions are documented in the Personnel Sections of any existing Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals.

SECTION 11.09 DEACON FELLOWSHIP DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Deacon's principle function is to glorify God by supporting the purpose and work of God in and through the Church. The general mission of a Deacon is to carry out those administrative and ministry needs that free the pastoral staff to giving their full attention to praying, teaching, preaching, equipping, giving oversight to leadership and shepherding matters of the body.

1. The Deacon Fellowship shall assist the Senior Pastor, in such manner as he shall request, in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the religious services, and performing all other work of the Church. They shall make provision for the observance of the ordinances of the Church. They shall, if requested by the Senior Pastor, consider applications for Church membership. They shall, in cooperation with the Senior Pastor, disburse the benevolence fund. The Deacon Fellowship shall assist the Senior Pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the Church's various ministries as requested by the Senior Pastor. They shall provide the pulpit supply and choose

a Moderator for Church meetings if the Senior Pastor is unavailable or the office of Senior Pastor is vacant.

2. Deacons are servant-ministers of the Church. Their purpose is to relieve the Senior Pastor of the multitude of practical duties of caring for the flock. Deacons are to give their primary attention toward caring for the congregation's physical and spiritual welfare. Deacons have the honor of modeling, for the local Church and the lost world, God's compassion, kindness, mercy, and love. As the Church compassionately cares for people's needs, the world sees a visible display of Christ's love which will draw some people to the Savior. Deacons are to be an example of commitment, unity, and harmony in their service. Examples of specific service would be (1) the collectors of funds, (2) the distributors of relief and (3) the agents of mercy. They shall help the poor, the jobless, the sick, the widowed, the elderly, the homeless, the shut-in, and the disabled. They shall comfort, protect, and encourage people, and help to meet their needs.

3. It shall be the responsibility of the Deacon Fellowship to give oversight to all mission activity of the Church. All Local, Regional, National, and International Mission activity of the church shall be guided by the Deacon Fellowship in conjunction with the Pastoral Staff, Missions Information Director, the WMU and the On Mission Ministry Team, and when deemed necessary, input by the Ministry Counsel. The stewardship of all mission dollars (budgeted or unbudgeted) shall be directed by the Deacon Fellowship in conjunction with the Pastoral Staff and Trustees.

4. It shall be the responsibility of the Deacon Fellowship along with the Pastoral Staff to insure that adequate Discipleship Ministries are ongoing. This can be accomplished through one-on-one methods or small groups. Making disciples is a Biblical Command that is essential to the spiritual health and well-being of individual believers and the local church. The work of evangelism and disciple-making are inseparable components of the biblical mandate to the Church.

5. At the beginning of each fiscal year the Fellowship of Deacons shall assemble and elect a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, and a Secretary.

SECTION 11.10 NUMBER, ELECTION AND DEACON TERMS OF OFFICE

The Deacon Fellowship shall consist of at least five (5) Deacons but the number shall never be so large as to be unwieldy. Deacons shall be elected by the Church at the fall Church business meeting. The Deacons so elected shall take office on January 1 following their election and shall serve on a three (3) year rotational basis. A Deacon may not serve more than two consecutive terms without one year off the Deacon Fellowship occurring after their second consecutive term before being eligible to be reelected to the Deacon Fellowship.

SECTION 11.11 DEACON QUALIFICATIONS

Any man who is a member of the Church that meets the qualifications of Scripture (Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13) shall be eligible for the office of Deacon, provided he is willing and able to serve. He shall also have been an active member of the Church for a period of at least one (1) year at the time of his election. Any man joining the Church by profession of faith shall have been an active member of this Church for a period of at least one (1) years at the time of his election as a Deacon. Each Deacon must be supportive of the Senior Pastor, Pastoral Staff, ministry philosophy, Constitution and By Laws, and the Church's Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals of the Church. All new and returning Deacons must complete a Deacon Nomination Questionnaire.

SECTION 11.12 PHEBE MINISTRY

The Phebe Ministries principle function is to glorify God by supporting the purpose and work of God in and through the Church. The general mission of the Phebe Ministry is to carry out in a helps capacity those administrative and ministry needs that assist the Deacons and that free the Pastoral Staff to give their full attention to praying, teaching, preaching, equipping and giving oversight to leadership and shepherding matters of the body. (Romans 16:1) Those who are asked to serve in our Phebe Ministry must be the wife of a currently serving Deacon or a duly appointed and Biblically qualified woman. (This will include all Deacons' wives and three ladies selected at large from the active membership of the Church annually). The wives of Pastoral Staff shall also be asked to serve

and participate whenever possible as an additional member of the Phebe Ministry. The Phebe Ministry is a helps ministry role that does not violate the Biblical principles of I Timothy 2:9-14.

SECTION 11.13 SELECTION AND TERMS OF SERVICE FOR PHEBE MINISTRY

Deacons' wives will serve in conjunction with their husbands' term of service. Phebe members at large shall serve for one year and may serve 6 consecutive terms of service, but must take one year off after having served for 6 consecutive years. A complete description of duties can be found in the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals.

SECTION 11.14 THE CHURCH CLERK

The Church's Clerk (Secretary) shall (and in his or her absence the Assistant Clerk):

1. Certify and keep at the office of the Church, the original Constitution and By Laws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the Constitution and By Laws;
2. Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law;
3. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and By Laws. (In case of the absence or disability of the Secretary/Clerk, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the Assistant Secretary/Clerk, Senior Pastor or by the Chairman of the Deacon Fellowship.);
4. Be custodian of the records of the Church, including the membership roll, baptisms, and certificates of ordination, licenses and commissions;
5. See that the reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed;
6. Exhibit at all reasonable times to proper persons on terms provided by law the minutes of the meetings of the Church's members;
7. Keep an account of any special events in the life of the Church which are of historical interest and give a report at the annual Church business meeting of the status of the Church's membership roll in the past year;
8. Keep all records at the office of the Church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office;
9. Serve as the Secretary of the corporation.

Election and terms of office for the Church Clerk and Assistant Clerk are spelled out in **Article 10.06(2)** A complete detailed Church Clerk job description can be found in the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals.

SECTION 11.15 THE CHURCH'S FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Staff Financial Officer shall (and in his or her absence the Assistant Staff Financial Officer):

1. Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the Church, and deposit all funds in the name of the Church in banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be directed by the trustees.
2. Disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the Church as may be directed by the trustees, through the budget adopted by the members of the Church at the annual Church budget meeting, taking proper vouchers for the disbursements.
3. Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the Church's properties and business transactions including an account of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, and capital.
4. Make all expenditures of the Church (except miscellaneous petty cash disbursements) by check.
5. When requested, render to the Trustees, accounts of all his/her transactions as Church Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Church.
6. Present a written report of itemized disbursements at the regular quarterly Church business meetings and make a general report for the year at the annual Church administration meeting.
7. Keep all Church financial records at the office of the Church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.
8. Receive, and give the required annual receipt for all contributions, gifts, and donations to the Church and its Members.
9. Accurately report to all contributors their gifts for tax deduction purposes.

10. Provide for all contributors a secure and confidential means for making all contributions.
11. Ensure that all contributions are properly recorded and deposited into the appropriate accounts.
12. Keep all giving records private and confidential, unless otherwise directed by the contributor.

SECTION 11.16 HIRING OF CHURCH FINANCIAL OFFICER AND DETAILED DUTIES

The Church Staff Financial Officer is a paid staff position as well as an Officer of the Church. The Trustees are responsible for the hiring and annual evaluation of the Church Staff Financial Officer. Although this person is an Officer of the Church the term for this office is indefinite as outlined in **Section 10.05(2)**. A complete detailed Church Staff Financial Officer's job description can be found in the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals. The Church Staff Financial Officer, as well as all paid staff members, are subject to the employment policies as so established by the Trustees. All financial matters are to be under the direction of the Trustees, Deacons, Senior Pastoral Staff and the Congregation.

SECTION 11.17 THE CHURCH TRUSTEES

While Scripture indicates that the Pastors and Deacons bear the ultimate responsibility for the watch care of the Church it does allow for the delegation of responsibilities. In addition, Ohio law requires that not for profit corporations be controlled by at least three Trustees. Therefore, the Deacon Fellowship and Senior Pastoral Staff of Ebenezer Baptist Church have specifically delegated to the Trustees the responsibility of overseeing the legal, financial, business and executive matters of the Church. The Trustees will also oversee and provide for the care and maintenance of all properties owned by the Church. The Chairman of the Trustees shall also serve as the President of the Corporation of the Church as so noted in **Section 10.04** of this Constitution and By Laws. The Trustees are accountable to the Deacon Fellowship and Senior Pastoral Staff and the members of the Church.

The Trustees shall create whatever internal organization they deem necessary or appropriate to carry out their responsibilities and to fulfill any requirements necessary for the officers of the church to act as the legal representatives of the Church. At the beginning of each fiscal year the Trustees shall, at a minimum, elect a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, and a Secretary of the Trustees.

Therefore, the Trustees shall have oversight in all financial matters of the Church and shall report to the entire Church body at the quarterly and annual business meetings. All financial expenditures must be approved by the Trustees and may not exceed the budgeted guidelines. Any expenditure that exceeds the appropriate budgeted guideline must first be approved by the Trustees. In addition, all unbudgeted expenses, except for emergencies when the Trustees shall be authorized to make expenditures to protect the properties of the church for an amount not over \$10,000 and in any other matter the Trustees may expend up to \$2500.00 without being first approved by the church.

The Trustees will manage the Church's property, both real and personal as fiduciaries. They shall, along with the appointed corporate officers, represent the Church in all of its legal matters and shall also:

1. See that accurate and complete financial records are being maintained in the Church office by all Staff Financial Officer. Review all prepared financial statements to be presented at the membership meetings.
2. Ensure that accurate, timely, and meaningful financial statements are prepared and presented to the Deacon Fellowship and the Church body.
3. Oversee the preparation and spending of the annual general operating budget.
4. Maintain adequate levels of cash reserves for summer months and possible drops in giving.
5. Study seasonal patterns of budget receipts and disbursements and adjust cash reserve levels accordingly.
6. Safeguard Church assets by implementing proper internal financial controls and the purchase of surety bonds on all employees who have access to the cash or checking accounts of the Church.
7. Ensure compliance with all federal, state, and other governmental reporting requirements.
8. Develop plans to ensure the safety and protection of members, guests and employees while on the Church's property.

9. Maintain and oversee the use of all Church vehicles.
10. Ensure that proper repairs and maintenance are made to church property and equipment in accordance with budgeted resources or as approved by the Church at a business meeting.
11. Be the caretakers and custodians of all Church owned facilities, ensuring proper maintenance and repairs and completed in a timely fashion.
12. Conduct an annual review/evaluation of all non pastoral staff.
13. Establish and maintain the Church's employee policy and handbook.
13. Oversee the hiring of all non pastoral related staff.
14. To assist the Deacon Fellowship and the Senior Pastor in the administrative oversight of the Church.
15. Provide oversight and development for all legal, financial and executive related committees. Review and update the fiscal policies and procedures and responsibilities of these committees.
16. Perform and maintain a fiduciary responsibility to the Church in all legal, financial and executive matters.
17. Review with the Senior Pastoral Staff and Deacon Fellowship to make recommendations for any revisions to the Constitution and By Laws or Articles of Incorporation.
18. Execute all legal documents relative to contracts, Church property and other business matters as conditioned by this Constitution and By Laws.
19. Participate in the strategic planning of the Church.
20. Set all salaries and hourly wages within the budgetary guidelines of the Church, and establish any employee benefits in compliance with Federal and State Law for all paid staff members. However, compensation packages for Pastoral Staff Members must be set in conjunction with the Deacon Fellowship and, when necessary, the Pulpit Search Committee.

SECTION 11.18 TRUSTEES AND THE CHURCH CEMETERY

The Trustees also have the responsibility of caring for and maintaining the Church cemetery. It is the duty of the Trustees to disburse all monies for the upkeep and improvement of the cemetery. The Trustees shall make regular reports to the Church and set all policy and regulations in relation to the cemetery. The monies so designated for the cemetery fund are to be used exclusively for said purposes of upkeep, improvement and future expansion. The Trustees shall annually appoint a supporting committee of not less than three members of the Church to oversee the day to day operations, maintain a directory of the location of all plots and to assure that accurate burial and plot records are kept in the Church office.

A complete detailed description of Cemetery rules, regulations and procedures can be found in the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals.

SECTION 11.19 NUMBER, ELECTION AND TRUSTEE TERMS OF OFFICE

The Trustees shall consist of not less than (5) five, nor more than (9) nine Trustees. Trustees shall be elected by the Church at the fall Church business meeting. The Trustees so elected shall take office on January 1 following their election and shall serve on a three (3) year rotational basis. A Trustee may not serve more than two consecutive terms one year between their sixth, twelfth, eighteenth term and their next election to the Trustees.

A complete detailed Trustee job description can be found in any existing Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manual. Election and terms of office for the Trustees are also spelled out in **Article 10**.

SECTION 11.20 SCHEDULED MEETING TIMES

The regular established meeting times for the Deacon Fellowship, Trustees and all Ministry Teams shall be established in the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals and shall be made available to all members.

ARTICLE XII: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

SECTION 12.01 PURPOSE

The Church believes that it is to provide the members with a Biblical education which is based upon and consistent with Biblical teachings. The Church believes that it has a duty to assist the home to provide a Christian education as well. To this end, the Church shall engage in ministries of education in keeping with the following dictates.

SECTION 12.02 STAFF MEMBERSHIP

All instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be members of this Church. This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or other special meetings strictly on a temporary basis.

SECTION 12.03 EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS TO BE IN ACCORD WITH THE STATEMENT OF FAITH

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the Statement of Faith of the Church. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs that fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with any provision of the Statement of Faith.

SECTION 12.04 UNITY

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the Church.

SECTION 12.05 TEACHING AND CURRICULUM

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God. Any assertion or belief which conflicts with or questions a Bible truth is a pagan deception and a distortion of the truth which will be disclaimed as false. It is the responsibility of every instructor or teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom. All teachers must be certified for teaching by completing an approved teacher training course in a timely fashion as outlined by the Pastoral Staff and the Deacon Fellowship. All curriculum and teaching materials must be approved by the Sunday School/ Education Ministry Team and the Pastoral Staff and Deacon Fellowship.

When deemed necessary a curriculum review committee may be established by the Pastoral Staff and the Deacon Fellowship.

SECTION 12.06 OVERSIGHT OF ALL EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

All educational programs or courses of instruction must be approved by the Pastoral Staff and Fellowship of Deacons. After selection by the Nominating Committee all teachers for all education programs must be approved by the Pastoral Staff and Deacon Fellowship and be presented to the church at the next regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting.

SECTION 12.07 THE WORK OF SUNDAY SCHOOL AND OUR EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Our broadly graded Sunday School Ministry functions as the backbone of our ministries at the Church. Sunday School is the means whereby we —Reach, Teach and Minister to all who have any connection to the Church. We believe that we assimilate the Church best through the context of small groups (Sunday School). Sunday School meets on Sunday morning before or after our morning corporate worship. Further descriptions and details of Sunday School can be found in the Organizational and/or the Policies and Procedures Manuals. See also **Article XIV** at the opening statement. See also **Section 17.09(2)** in regards to the selection of Sunday School Leadership and service terms.

SECTION 12.08 THE WORK OF SMALL GROUP DISCIPLESHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF OUR EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Small Group Ministries outside the context of Sunday School are supplementary to the spiritual growth, discipleship and accountability that already exists within the ministry of Sunday School. Groups are to be structured with husband and wife teams or with groups of men meeting with men or ladies meeting with ladies. The Pastoral Staff and Deacon Fellowship (or their duly appointed Ministry Team) shall have oversight of all Small Group Ministries that are affiliated with the Church. The format, structure and study materials as well as group leaders must be approved by those giving oversight. All other guidelines will be documented in any existing the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals.

ARTICLE XIII: MINISTRY TEAMS

SECTION 13.01 MINISTRY TEAMS

Ministry Teams exist to perform specific roles of ministry. Teams are the basic organizing units of the Church to accomplish the Church's ministry goals within the guidelines of our Purpose Statement. These teams devise and carry out the numerous ministries of the Church. Unlike committees, their primary role is not to exercise administrative responsibilities or set policy. Ministry Teams will possess no authority or responsibility at the corporate level of the Church and are not subject to any service rotation system. Rather, they are the hands and feet of the body of Christ. A team is a small group of people with complementary skills committed to a common purpose or goal and for which they are willing to be mutually accountable. Teams are an effective way to help people identify their spiritual gifts and to empower them develop a passion for ministry. Ministry Teams may vary in size depending upon their specific purpose and upon those available to serve in that capacity. All members in good standing of the Church may serve on a ministry team, using their giftedness for service. Each Ministry Team will function under a Ministry Position Description, which will outline their primary ministry purpose and briefly describe anticipated duties and responsibilities. The Pastoral Staff shall give broad oversight to all teams and shall oversee, with the assistance of the Nominating Committee, the selection of the team leaders. The four primary Ministry Team designations are as follows:

1. Worship Ministry Team (Exaltation)
2. Instruction Ministry Team (Equipping)
3. Fellowship Ministry Team (Encouraging)
4. Evangelism Ministry Team (Evangelization)

Numerous other supporting Ministry Teams may also be established to assist these primary Ministry Teams in fulfilling the mission and purpose statement of the Church. These Ministry Teams could include, but not be exclusive of the following: Children's Ministry Team, Youth Ministry Team, Music Ministry Team, Men's Ministry Team, Women's Ministry Team, WMU, Seniors Ministry Team, Fair Ministry Team, Nursery Team, VBS Team, Audio/Visual Ministry Team, Celebrate Recovery Team, A/V Duplication Ministry Team, Web Page Ministry Team, Greeter Ministry Team, Usher Team, FAITH Evangelism Team, Missions Information Team, On Mission Team, Kitchen/Food Ministry Team, Sunday School/Educational Ministry Team. The preceding list is not exhaustive. Any Ministry team may be added and any of the listed teams may be dispensed with without having to amend this Constitution and By Laws.

The Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manual of the Church disclose all Ministry Team designations and their respective Ministry Position Descriptions and duties. These Ministry guidelines and organizational structures must be followed by each team and all Ministry Teams will ultimately be under the scrutiny and oversight of the Deacon Fellowship and Pastoral Staff.

SECTION 13.05 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES OF MINISTRY TEAMS

As so indicated in **Section 17.09(1)** at the July and October Business Meeting of the church the Nominating Committee shall make recommendations for each Ministry Team Leader. Each Ministry Team shall at its first meeting of the year select other appropriate leaders. These organizational leaders (which could include a secretary or other necessary team leadership which have not been selected by the Congregation) are to be selected and appointed by the team as deemed necessary by the team.

SECTION 13.06 MEETINGS OF MINISTRY TEAMS

Each Ministry Team shall set its own time for meeting, so as to carry out its duties as outlined in the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals. Ministry Teams shall follow the accepted standard for meeting times as outlined in **Section 9.02**. It should also be noted that Ministry Teams do not set policy or act unilaterally without receiving approval from the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, or Trustees.

SECTION 13.07 BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS FOR MINISTRY TEAMS

Each Ministry Team must operate within the financial budgetary guidelines and constraints as set forth annually by the Trustees and approved by the congregation. No expenditures shall exceed the annual budget unless the Trustees have given prior approval for the expenditure. For further details on the operating budget see the Financial Policy in the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures handbook. Any financial impropriety by any ministry team or ministry leadership will result in immediate church discipline.

SECTION 13.08 TERMS OF SERVICE/OFFICE FOR MINISTRY TEAMS

Teams may exist for a very short term to perform a specific ministry or may be ongoing in nature. Team Leaders will be nominated and enlisted for one year of service. On-going Ministry Team members may be elected for one year of service and re-elected as needed every year. Exceptions to any terms of service must be approved by the Pastoral Staff, and Deacon Fellowship. All Ministry Teams serve based on the Calendar year (January 1 to December 31) of the church with the exception of the SS/Educational Ministry Team which serves (September 1 to August 31).

SECTION 13.09 DEVELOPMENT AND DISSOLUTION OF MINISTRIES (TEAMS)

New Ministry Teams may gain recognition by means of the approval of the Pastoral Staff and the Deacon Fellowship, then the budgeting of funds by the Trustees.

Recognized Ministry Teams may only be dissolved by the recommendation and approval of the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, and Trustees.

SECTION 13.10 CIVIL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL MINISTRIES

1. All of the Church's ministries will seek to comply with the laws of the federal government, state and local government. However, any laws that violate our beliefs which are founded upon the Word of God may be challenged by the Church.

2. Members in leadership roles and supporting staff roles will be subject to background checks, particularly those who work with any persons under eighteen years old or with the finances of the Church.

3. Leaders and workers in all children's ministries will be held accountable to the Classroom Discipline and Conduct Code of the Ebenezer Baptist Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals.

4. Any inappropriate action of any Church worker will be verbally reported immediately to the Senior Pastor and or the Deacon Fellowship, which report shall be reduced to writing at the earliest opportunity.

5. Any inappropriate action of any participant in any church activity will be verbally reported immediately to the Senior Pastor and or the Deacon Fellowship, which report shall be reduced to writing at the earliest opportunity.

6. The Senior Pastor and Deacon Fellowship will respond, according to Scripture and state law, to such reports concerning questionable behavior and take all appropriate and necessary action to resolve the matter. See **Section 7.09**

7. Parents of children less than eighteen years of age must give signed permission for their minor to participate in activities away from the Church's property particularly if the activity may involve travel in a Church vehicle and/or an overnight stay.

ARTICLE XIV: MINISTRY PRIORITIES

SECTION 14.01 WORSHIP (EXALT)

The purpose of Worship at the Church is to glorify God by helping believers worship the one true living God in spirit and in truth on a daily basis and when the Church is assembled together corporately. (John 4:20-24)

Priority Objectives - Priority objectives for the accomplishment of the purpose of Worship will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Help believers know who God is - His glory, His majesty, His power, His worth.
2. Help believers know who they are in Christ.
3. Have a time of uninterrupted praise and worship in songs, hymns and spiritual songs allowing people to get their focus off of themselves and their circumstances, and placed upon God and His glory.
4. Have a good balance of rich, traditional hymns of the faith and beautiful and contemporary, non-repetitious praise choruses. See also our Church Music Policy for further details which may be found in our Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals.
5. Enhance our worship services by having special ensembles and choirs, youth and children's music, and children's musicals as well as drama that enhances both our music and reaching.
6. Help the congregation have the freedom to sing loudly and joyfully or be still, and know that our God reigns.
7. Grow in our freedom in Christ and the leadership and ministry of the Holy Spirit in our assembly meetings.
8. Be contemporary – seeking to remain relevant to our target community in worship and ministry styles so there are fewer barriers to the acceptance of the gospel.
9. Along with other spiritual disciplines (study, meditation on God's Word, service, fellowship, silence sacrifice etc.), prayer and fasting are the bedrock of all we are and do. It is prayer that ignites our faith in the infinite God. It is prayer that creates a vision for the kingdom and enables us to see things from God's perspective. It is prayer that gives us the proper disposition and expresses our dependence upon almighty God. Leadership strongly encourages all members to worship their Lord and God by practice of these disciplines personally and corporately.

Organization - The primary organizational structure which will be used to implement the appropriate plans to fulfill such objectives will be directed by the Senior Minister, Deacon Fellowship and Worship Ministry Team. Refer to the separate Leadership Position Descriptions and Ministry Descriptions for additional information regarding their duties and responsibilities.

SECTION 14.02 INSTRUCTION (EQUIP)

The purpose of Instruction at the Church is to glorify God by helping believers have love out of a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith. (I Timothy 1:5; II Timothy 3:14-17) **See also Article XII** (Ministry of Education).

Priority Objectives - Priority objectives for the accomplishment of the purpose of Instruction will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Instruction to believers is to be:
 - (1) Biblical in content

(2) Accurate in interpretation

(3) Practical in application

(4) Systematic in presentation

2. Help every believer discover the joy and value of reading, studying, meditating, memorizing, believing, and obeying the Scriptures.

3. Help believers understand important dispensational distinctives like: Law and Grace; Kingdom and Church; Israel and the Body of Christ.

4. Teach the importance of a clear conscience – What we are always, determines what we do.

Our private lives and public lives are equally important. Leadership is committed to teaching truthful principals that develop character and help the believer do what is right under any circumstances.

(Hebrews 13:8)

5. Create a team-based ministry – We believe God never intended church to be a spectator sport, but that He gives vital spiritual gifts to every believer. The discovery, development, and exercise of these gifts are the primary instrument of Christ to minister to His body. The role of ministers and church leaders is to equip, instruct, and encourage the believers in this process. We are committed to helping people serve each other according to their spiritual gifts, so that all might become mature in Christ. (Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:1-16; I Peter 4:8-11)

6. Open up the learning process – the Church encourages its teachers to discuss and explore openly what Scriptural truth means and implies. Helping people process the truth makes a far greater impact on their life than just telling them the truth in a lecturing approach.

7. Stress foundation building – the Church helps people establish the essential elements for spiritual life, growth, and ministry. Our priority is to help people do the most important things well, not just do more things.

8. Allow and encourage parents to be the most influential people in a child's life. The family is the foundation for spiritual learning and experience.

9. Be the university for disciple-makers – Leadership will strive to offer courses, network relationships, provide community, showcase examples, and serve as a laboratory and offer a context for continuous disciple-making.

10. Support the education and instruction training programs of our local association and state convention as well as offer ongoing training for teachers and others who desire to serve in the ministry of the local church.

Organization - The primary organizational structure that will be used to implement the appropriate plans to fulfill such objectives will be directed by the Instruction (Educational/Sunday School) Ministry Team, Fellowship of Deacons, and the Senior Pastoral Staff. Refer to any separate Leadership Position Descriptions and Ministry Descriptions for additional information regarding their duties and responsibilities.

SECTION 14.03 FELLOWSHIP (EDIFY)/MINISTRY

The purpose of Fellowship at the Church is to glorify God by providing the opportunities for people to get their relationship needs met, whether it is from the most casual contact to the deepest most intimate issues of the heart. (I John 1:3, 7) Ministry to one another is one of the highest priorities of our ministry and a clear command in scripture.

Priority Objectives - Priority objectives for the accomplishment of the purpose of Ministry / Fellowship will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Provide places and opportunities to build relationships through casual contact and friendly greeting, time spent together over a meal or dessert, small group meetings which are regular, more personal, deeper and more accountable, and one on one deep accountability that will foster sharing and transparency.

2. Stress the importance of character - Character is the expression of the person of Christ in our life. We will strive to live consistent, Christian lifestyles, conducting our ministry and business with the highest standards of integrity and Christian ethics.

3. Develop and allow the creation of loving relationships in small groups (Sunday School being the

primary small group and will be given the highest priority) – We believe spiritual growth happens best in the context of caring relationships, where people actively participate in a small group of believers who encourage, challenge, pray, serve, and learn together. Every person in the Church needs a shepherd, someone who knows their unique story and is involved deeply in their lives. We are committed to developing an expanding network of these small groups, led by people with shepherd hearts, which, when joined together, form a purposeful, loving community. (Acts 2:42-47; Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 10:24-25) —But if we are living in the light of God’s presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7)

4. Unity forged by authenticity – We believe God longs for His people to be united in spirit and purpose, and that He intends for us to live life honestly. Unity is created and preserved when people are not afraid to admit their flaws and fears, and also when people are willing to speak the truth in love to each other (even when it is difficult and Church discipline is necessary). We are committed to living authentic lives with God and with each other. (John 17:20-23; Ephesians 4:15; Philippians 2:1-2; James 5:16)

5. Offering quality counseling – We will foster a unique but intentionally quiet ministry that offers professional and lay counseling to Church members and those in the community referred by ministers and professionals. Special classes and preventative guidance in critical and sensitive personal areas of growth will also be offered.

6. Assist the body through a financial counseling ministry – Financial problems are one of the primary causes of divorces. the Church is committed to teaching biblical financial principles, giving training in budget preparation and counseling members who are having personal or business financial problems.

7. Be committed to one another. Leadership recognizes and values the skills, gifts, and experience which God has given to members and thus participates mutually in planning, decision making, and in sharing the resources which God provides. Esteeming one another highly, members will participate together in the mission the Lord has given and will seek out the spiritual and professional growth of the Church staff. Romans 12:5-6 —In Christ we who are many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

8. Promote spiritual development by providing opportunities for nourishment, support, and encouragement for members at their various stages of growth and maturity.

9. Initiate, organize and implement Church-wide and aged-group social activities in coordination with the total ministry of the Church.

10. Build loving relationships with each other for encouragement, exhortation, edification, admonition and unity. —A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. (John 13:34,35)

11. Establish a dynamic Sports/recreation ministry utilizing our facilities to minister to our own families but also reach out to families in the local community.

12. Actively shepherd and assimilate new Christians and new members into Church life.

13. Equip and empower individuals to be healthy social beings (active in the life of the community, Church, family, work environment, and other important social relationships).

14. Be accountable as —each one helping the other keeping the commitments they have made to God on the basis of loving relationships. Members will agree to submit themselves to this process within the Church or member established Ministry Teams and the body-at-large. All will rejoice together in the fruits of this process.

Organization - The primary organizational structure that will be used to implement the appropriate plans to fulfill such objectives will be directed by the Pastoral Staff, the Fellowship of Deacons and the Fellowship Ministry Team. Refer to any separate Leadership Position Descriptions and Ministry Descriptions for additional information regarding their duties and responsibilities.

SECTION 14.04 EVANGELISM (EVANGELIZE)

The purpose of Evangelism at the Church is to glorify God by helping every believer effectively and faithfully participate with Christ in sharing the gospel by lifestyle and word in our community and the world. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Priority Objectives - Priority objectives for the accomplishment of the purpose of Evangelism will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Help believers know and understand: - the Purpose, Priority, and Plan of God to redeem, reclaim and save the lost from all nations including:
 - (1) Our individual call and responsibility to the gospel as an ambassador of Christ and minister of reconciliation. (II Cor. 5:17-21)
 - (2) The content of the gospel of grace. (I Cor. 15:1-4)
2. Raise an army of soul-winners, who make it their personal objective to testify as to the transforming power of God in salvation.
3. Have a "Global Mindset" while we are locally involved in life and ministry.
4. Pray for and be sensitive to opportunities for the gospel every day and for the sending of laborers into all regions of the world.
5. Develop plans and opportunities to raise and send laborers on short-term mission trips from our own body.
6. Invest significantly in and support the work of the gospel throughout the world.
7. Plant local indigenous Bible believing churches.
8. Hold conferences on evangelism, ministers' seminars, and other equipping meetings to provide training in various aspects of evangelism.
9. Train the next generation of evangelists to preach the gospel.
10. Use the internet as a ministry tool to share the good news of Jesus Christ.
11. Develop personal ministry involvement from members who possess the talent and knowledge of the use of technology. Technological advances are making national economies interdependent and are bringing about a rapid cultural change.
12. Strive to be a multi-national ministry – because we are comprised of people from diverse national backgrounds celebrating that God's love embraces the whole human race.
13. Create an intentional college/university outreach in order to be a lighthouse in our college community by directing a ministry and outreach to the college student body and faculty around us.
14. Minister in our local jails and prisons in order to prepare members for effective witness through teaching, modeling, and outreach opportunities within the jails and prisons of our community.
15. Provide support for existing urban, ethnic, trans-cultural ministries and church planting.
16. Promote a healthy desire for personal witness to family, friends and colleagues.
17. Share the love and knowledge of Christ through our lifestyles and through formal evangelism strategies.

The above priority objectives will be accomplished through biblical education, exposure, equipping and participation by the members and attendees.

Organization - The primary organizational structure that will be used to implement the objectives will be directed by the Pastoral Staff, Fellowship of Deacons, and the Missions and Evangelism Ministry Team. For a more full explanation please refer to the separate Leadership Position Descriptions and Ministry Descriptions regarding their duties and responsibilities.

SECTION 14.05 STEWARDSHIP/SERVICE (ENABLE)

The purpose of Stewardship at the Church is to glorify God by performing the works of the ministry in a "decent and orderly" manner while encouraging all members to serve the Lord our God in the work of the ministry. (I Cor. 14:40)

Priority Objectives - Priority objectives for the accomplishment of the purpose of Stewardship/Service will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Having trained and disciplined believers we are committed to placing everyone in the work of the

ministry in and through the Church.

2. Serving and working in the ministry is not an option for the follower of Christ, but rather a command. We expect every member of the Church to be involved in the ministry life of the Church operating within their spiritual gifts and physical abilities.
3. Leading and administrating the business affairs of the Church by the use of Biblical principles.
4. Operating under a properly documented and updated Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By Laws. Those organic documents are supplemented by any existing Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals.
5. Maintaining a current Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals which addresses leadership, management, personnel, financial, facilities, general administration and ministry matters. Adequate documentation will support each adopted policy and procedure.
6. Providing preventive maintenance programs to lengthen the life of the Church's owned properties, equipment and other assets.
7. Documenting and permanently filing all actions of the Deacon Fellowship, Trustees, congregational meetings, oversight ministry teams and committee meetings.
8. Functioning under accurate and timely Leadership Position Descriptions for all Church employees and active lay ministry leaders.
9. Serving the Church and establishing ministry programs under a Church approved Employee Handbook that will give instruction and guidance to all paid employees.
10. The Church shall seek to establish an effective system of internal financial controls to ensure integrity over the receipt and use of God's financial resources and the safeguarding of Church assets.
11. Providing full disclosure of the Church's financial affairs to any Church member who makes a reasonable request.
12. Maintaining high standards in all fund-raising appeals and assuring that donor confidentiality exists at all times.
13. Assisting ministry leaders to be wise stewards of the financial resources which have been set aside in the Church's General Operating Budget for the work of their ministry area. Restricted (designated) gifts will be properly managed based on the donor's intent unless the donor's intent would violate the Church's standards.
14. Establishing opportunities for creating and using ministry endowments and foundations. Be open to pursuing financial grants that enhance the purposes of the Church; but do not hinder Church ministries through governmental entanglement.
15. Assessing areas of potential risks to the Church by developing and adhering to safety and protection practices and guidelines.
16. The Church recognizes that God has richly blessed our congregation with financial wealth, with a wealth of talent and other personal resources. We must seek to live lives characterized by generosity towards one another and toward those outside the Church that are less fortunate. We believe biblical stewardship is both a response of a loving heart to the grace of God and a skill which can be developed through biblical instruction.
17. As bearers of God's image, we are enabled to express his creativity in the world around us. We must strive to carry out this calling by means of innovative products and programs and through the use of new technologies which communicate God's Word in culturally relevant and compelling ways. —Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.¶ (Psalm 96:3)
18. We believe that growth is the essential element in the life of a healthy and productive Church. We know that growth by evangelism is an important part of that process. Thus, we strive to create structures that will encourage growth as well as provide opportunities for believers to become more effective in evangelism and personal ministry. (Acts 2:47, 4:4, 6:7, etc.)
19. In all our dealings, we will follow the highest ethical standards to ensure our stewardship of the resources entrusted to us. We are responsible before God, one another, and all people for our programs, relationships, personal lifestyles, and expenditures of time and money. —In my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever.¶ (Psalm 41:12)
20. Within all of our ministries, we will maintain standards of quality which reflect the excellence of

the God whom we serve. —Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

21. Committed to confidential, trusting relationships while modeling forgiveness, reconciliation, and humility.

22. We are convinced that in order to follow Christ, we must be committed to change and be willing to be innovative so that we do not place any barriers to growth in our way to becoming the body of believers Christ wants us to be. However, we can never change our message of truth although we may change our methods to reach the world.

Organization - The primary organizational structure that will be used to implement the appropriate plans to fulfill such objectives will be directed by the Pastoral Staff, the Trustees, the Deacon Fellowship and various Ministry Teams. Refer to any separate Leadership Position Descriptions and Ministry Descriptions for additional information regarding their duties and responsibilities.

SECTION 14.06 MISSIONS

Although it is interwoven into the very fabric of all that we do, the Church is committed to the support of and participation in missions locally, regionally and throughout the world. Complete details of the Church's comprehensive mission's ministry can be found in the Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals.

Purpose: The Great Commission calls the Church to plan, supervise and participate in the development and deployment of human, financial and partnership resources for ministry opportunities; locally, nationally and globally; to exalt and proclaim Jesus Christ among the nations.

Oversight: The Deacon Fellowship is given the primary responsibility for the oversight of all missions activity, See **11.09 (3)** for further clarification. The Deacon Fellowship may appoint any necessary committee(s) to provide assistance in the oversight of missions.

Participation: It is imperative that the membership of the Church not only give financially to the support of missions but that they annually commit to sending laymen from the Church membership to actively participate in a wide variety of missions activities locally, regionally and globally. It should be the ultimate goal of the Church body to disciple and train members who will answer the call to full time vocational missions.

Support: We are committed to a two prong approach in the financial support of missions. We are committed to the support of the Missions Ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention. We are also committed to the support of missionaries and missions organizations that are not a part of the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative program, which we believe will enable us to accomplish our mission's purpose and as long as those missions and or other organizations are in agreement with our Statement of Faith.

It shall be the policy of this Church to support only missionaries and mission agencies engaged principally in evangelization and the establishment of New Testament Baptist churches. Schools, hospitals, orphanages, relief and similar ministries must be subordinate to the primary objectives. The agencies shall be Baptist in name and or known to be in hearty agreement with our doctrine and practices.

The Church may also make contributions to Christian schools, social agencies, literature services, rescue missions and youth organizations etc. which are known to be in complete agreement with our Statement of Belief, both in doctrine and practice. These contributions can be an unbudgeted contribution or budgeted addition to the missionary budget, as deemed appropriate by the Pastoral Staff, Fellowship of Deacons and Trustees.

Supported Missionaries: Only missionaries serving under approved agencies will be supported by the Church. The candidate must be interviewed by the Pastor and or the Deacon Fellowship for testimony, questioning; declaring affirmation of the Church Statement of Faith. Upon approval, the missionary will be presented to the Church as a candidate for support. The Church will hear or be told of the missionary's testimony and of their field of ministry. At the recommendation of the Senior Pastoral Staff, the Deacon Fellowship (or any appointed Missions Committee) and the Trustees at any properly called business meeting of the Church the missionary and or missionary endeavor will

be presented for addition to the support budget.

Special efforts are to be made to assist the missionary in the field and to faithfully communicate with the missionary while on the field. All missionary support will be reviewed and approved annually in the preparation of the Annual Budget. The support of a missionary may be discontinued, upon recommendation of the Senior Pastoral Staff and The Deacon Fellowship (or any appointed Missions Committee) followed by the appropriate presentation to the Church at a properly called business meeting.

A detailed Missions Policy can be found in the Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals.

WMU Support of Missions: WMU supports any missionary or missionary endeavor which is (1) an approved agency or missionary of the Church, (2) any missionary support of the Southern Baptist Convention, or (3) any other mission activity which has been reviewed and approved by the Senior Pastoral Staff and the Deacon Fellowship. The primary missionary endeavor of the WMU is to offer special assistance for missions and missionaries who are already supported by the Church or special assistance to other approved missionary endeavors of the Church or the Southern Baptist Convention.

WMU General Activity and Accountability: The WMU must provide a monthly report to the Women's Ministries Team Leader. In addition to this report, the WMU must present a financial accounting of its mission activities to the Deacon Fellowship or any duly appointed Missions Committee. A detailed description the WMU activities (which are not limited to —missions!) can be found in the Church Organizational and or Policies and Procedures Manuals.

ARTICLE XV: GENERAL MINISTRY DISTINCTIVES AND VALUES

SECTION 15.01 LEADERSHIP

Each Leader of Ebenezer Baptist Church must strive to sharpen their life and service by obtaining the following thirteen personal qualities: (See also Article X, Section 10.03)

- 1. Visionary Capacity:** The Ability to project a vision into the future, persuasively motivates people toward that vision, and brings it into reality.
- 2. Intrinsically Motivated:** Approaches ministry as a self-starter and commits to excellence through long and hard work.
- 3. Create the Ownership of Ministry:** Instills in people a sense of personal responsibility for the growth and success of ministry and trains leaders to reproduce leaders.
- 4. Relate to the Unchurched:** Ability to develop rapport, break through barriers, and encourage unchurched people to examine themselves and commit to a walk with God. The Leader also should lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- 5. Spousal Cooperation:** When married, create a workable partnership that agrees on ministry priorities, each partner's role and involvement in ministry, and the integration of ministry with family life.
- 6. Effectively Build Relationships:** Takes the initiative in getting to know people and deepening relationships as a basis for a more effective ministry.
- 7. Committed to Church Growth:** Values Church growth as a method for building more and better disciple. Strive to achieve numerical growth within the context of spiritual and relational growth.
- 8. Responsive to the Community:** Adapts the ministry to the culture and needs of local residents while seeking to engage in community issues and concerns.
- 9. Utilizes the Gifts of Others:** Equips and releases people to do ministry according to their spiritual gifts.
- 10. Flexible and Adaptable:** Ability to adjust to change and ambiguity, shift priorities when necessary, and handle multiple tasks at once.
- 11. Build Group Cohesiveness:** Enable the group to work collaboratively toward a common goal and skillfully handle divisiveness and non-unifying elements to create positive resolutions.

12. **Demonstrate Resilience:** Has the ability to sustain one's self emotionally and physically even through setbacks, losses, disappointments, and failures.
13. **Exercise Faith:** Demonstrates how their convictions are translated into personal ministry goals.

SECTION 15.02 ADDITIONAL MINISTRY DISTINCTIVES

The Leadership of the Church must display these additional ministry distinctives and values:

1. They must be committed to Godly leadership – As such, we believe that the key to successfully fulfilling God's mission for our Church is having staff and lay leaders who are committed to integrity and holiness. (I Timothy 3; Titus 1)
2. We serve under a plurality form of leadership with transparency - The spiritual oversight responsibilities of this body of believers rests with The Pastoral Staff and the Deacon Fellowship. Leadership constantly strives to display a transparency to the body as it relates to their daily walk with the Lord. Refer to **Article 5.09** in the By Laws for additional information and support regarding plurality of leadership.
3. We believe in the priority of our principles over our comfort or preferences. We will be willing to live our lives outside of our natural comfort zones in order to achieve our principles.
4. We value our heritage over tradition. We know there is much to be gained from the great men and women of faith who have gone before us. We value the rich heritage they have left us through their deeds, words and music. We do not believe we have all the answers, are in any way superior to those who have gone before us or even over those who minister in other ways in the present time. We seek to understand our role in the history of the church and impart that heritage to those who come after us. We are not bound by the successful methods of others in this time or times past. We recognize that the world is changing at a rapid pace and methods that work today may not work tomorrow. We expect God to continue demonstrating His remarkable creativity by showing us exciting and effective strategies to present His Gospel to our community and the world.
5. We have a decentralized ministry. Therefore, ministry is to take place out in the midst of a fallen world and so our challenge is to provide a balance between times when believers are gathered together to be equipped for ministry and times when they are sent out to do the ministry for which every member has been commissioned by Christ.
6. We must emphasize faithfulness, not simply fruitfulness. Rather than focus on bearing fruit in our ministries, either numerically or spiritually, we believe we are called instead to be faithful. We must allow the Lord to determine the level of fruitfulness we are to enjoy. However, our emphasis in no way negates the responsibility that all believers have to grow spiritually or the responsibility we have to go into the highways and hedges and compel others to come in.
7. We believe in identifying and training young leaders who are fully committed to Christ. We will ask them to reach their generation with the Gospel. It is the Church's responsibility through the power of the Holy Spirit to raise up men and women who will take the baton of godly character, authentic faith, and servant hearted leadership into the next generation.
8. We stress the need for the Lordship of Christ and the Fullness of the Spirit in our daily lives. (II Corinthians 5:15; John 15:1-17; Ephesians 5:18) We are to strive for mastery as commanded by scripture and is made possible when we respond to God's grace by personally accepting Jesus Christ as Lord. We are to put on the whole armor of God and practice spiritual disciplines in our lives daily. (I Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 6:10-18; Philippians 1:27)
9. We must desire and practice accountability. We must have a spirit of accountability. Each leader must make themselves accountable to the entire group for their struggles and personal growth goals.
10. We recognize that the Church is not just the Pastor or the Deacon Fellowship. The Pastors, Deacons and staff must keep the body on track with its mission, equip and empower the members of the congregation for works of ministry. The congregation must reach out in ministry to a lost world.
11. We believe the Church must be culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure.
12. We desire to ground the Church's life in our biblical vision so that the Church's way of life, including its organizational structures, decision-making processes, policies and procedures, and management relationships, reflect Christian excellence and gives glory to Christ.

13. We must engage in a strategic ministry planning and the development of an annual ministry plan so that we can accomplish our mission statement and fulfill our purpose of ministering.

14. We believe in building on relationships and networking. We will strive to build relationships and networks at the grassroots level in locations around the world to mobilize churches, community groups, donors, corporations, and volunteers in effective ministry alliances.

15. We must work hard to retain high levels of public trust and safeguard our reputation by applying good stewardship principles, using resources for the purposes for which they were given, by building collaborative partnerships, and by being open and factual with all constituents.

16. We must continually measure the performance of our annual ministry plan and be accountable to performance objectives as ministry programs. All costs must be rigorously scrutinized to obtain the maximum benefit.

SECTION 15.02 SCRIPTURES

Our leadership believes that all principles and practices of ministry must be submitted to God's Holy Scriptures. In saying this, leadership agrees that a clear distinction must be made between traditions, however effective they may have been in the past, and the clear teachings of the Word of God. The creative power of the Spirit of God must be allowed, through the Church's leadership, to constantly re-evaluate the activities of the congregation. Therefore, they must be willing to discard old programs in order to change to new approaches in which God is leading us to change. The birthing of new ministries should parallel with God's provision of proven leadership.

The Church's leadership is committed to these additional scriptural distinctives and core values:

1. Teach the Word of God in a practical, inspiring way. The Bible is contemporary as the spoken Word of God, telling us who God is, how He has revealed Himself, what He has done in Jesus Christ for our salvation, and showing us how to have fellowship with Him.

2. Be people of the Word in studying God's Word, through excellence in Bible teaching, and living what the Bible says. —If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (John 15:7,8)

3. The scripture and its message of God's redemption of the world through Christ are the church's authority for faith, life, and ministry. Leadership strives to affirm and carry out the ministries of the Church in line with the grand themes of Scripture. These themes include, but are not limited to: See **Article V** for further details.

(1) The sovereignty of God.

(2) A historical-redemptive understanding of God's Word.

(3) God's mission to save the world and the church's key role in that mission.

(4) The dignity and worth of all human beings as image bearers of God.

(5) Salvation by grace alone through faith.

(6) The Holy Spirit as the giver and sustainer of spiritual life.

(7) The Lordship of Christ over all of life.

(8) The unity and diversity of the body of Christ.

(9) Word and deed as inseparable parts of our obedience.

(10) Prayer as the most important expression of our thankfulness to God.

(11) Word and Communion as central in Christian worship.

(12) Christian vocation as encompassing everyday life and work.

(13) The hope for a new heaven and new earth.

SECTION 15.03 WORSHIP

The Church's leadership is committed to following these worship distinctives and core values:

1. Becoming true worshippers - Worship services are designed primarily for the purpose of biblical teaching and personal praise. An emphasis has been placed on worship through music, but that is not the only means of —worship. (See our Church policy on Music in the Church Policy and Procedures Manual) Leadership feels that music must prepare the heart for receiving God's Word. The primary method of biblical teaching is through expository teaching, accompanied with practical applications. Services are not designed with a performance, entertainment or spectator mentality in mind.

Corporate worship services are not considered traditional or charismatic in style.

2. Stressing the importance of making public commitments to Christ and the church. It is vital for a believer to make a public declaration of devotion to Christ and to enter a formal covenant of partnership and accountability with other believers of the Church. (Romans 10:9; Matthew 10:32,33; Philippians 1:4,5; I Timothy 6:12; II Timothy 1:8)

SECTION 15.04 INSTRUCTION

The Church's leadership is committed to following these instruction distinctives and core values:

1. Emphasis on the men - While recognizing the Church has a responsibility to nurture all of its members, leadership feels that a special ministry emphasis must be placed on the husbands, fathers, and heads of the homes in order that they can properly teach and train each member within their home in the infallible Word of God. Therefore, the Church's leadership desires to build spiritually healthy men through their accountability to other proven Godly men.

2. Emphasis on the family - There are three divine institutions, which the Lord has established on this earth - the (1) family, (2) church, and (3) government. Since the family was the first of these institutions to be established, our leadership believes that the parents have the primary responsibility for teaching and training their children for God. The Church must not merely co-exist with the family, nor should the Church, through its programs (however good those programs may be), set up conflicts with the family. Instead, the Church must assist parents in every possible way to teach their children to love, honor, and serve the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Church's ministries and programs must compliment, not divide the family.

3. Using Spiritual Gifts, Temperament, and Spiritual Passion - Leadership believes every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and has been given at least one spiritual gift by God for the benefit of the Church. Since the Church, which is the Body of Christ cannot be healthy and effective without every member exercising their spiritual gift(s) for the benefit of the whole. Therefore, each Church member will be instructed on how to discern their spiritual gift, temperament and spiritual passion. In addition, each member will be continually encouraged by our Leadership to exercise their gifts in local and global ministries.

4. Equipping the saints through adult electives and Sunday School classes – To balance between verse by verse exposition of Scripture and topical areas of importance and interest, a wide variety of adult electives and Sunday School classes will be offered to supplement corporate biblical instruction. These classes are designed to further equip, educate, and edify each member of the body on a small-group basis. Reach (evangelism), Teach (through the study of God's Word) and Ministry (meeting others needs) are the three core principles of our Sunday School and all small groups ministries.

5. Stress the Discipleship process for all who are followers of Christ – Both one on one as well as small-group discipleship groups are encouraged and planned for the new believer as well as the seasoned, mature follower of Christ.

6. The development and implementation of a Lay Bible Institute is part of the long term plan for instruction in scriptures, training of leadership and for the general spiritual growth of all believers.

SECTION 15.05 FELLOWSHIP

The Church's leadership is committed to following these fellowship distinctives and core values:

1. A time to heal - Realizing that certain believers who visit our assembly might be coming from a prior church experience in which they have been spiritually wounded, it is the desire of leadership that these individuals take whatever time is needed to properly heal before they become directly involved in any ministry of this assembly.
2. Caring and accountability of all members – Our Church must minister to all members within this local assembly. Leadership recognizes the importance of social interaction as a way of establishing relationships on a more meaningful level, providing support and accountability among the members. Programs are provided in various areas of ministry to encourage fellowship among families, peer groups and on an individual basis.
3. Fellowship around the table as well as fellowship in the word is encouraged for the body in corporate gatherings, Small Groups, Sunday School Classes, Ministry Teams and with each other as brothers and sisters in Christ meeting from house to house as well as in the Church's facilities.

SECTION 15.06 EVANGELISM

The Church's leadership is committed to following these evangelism distinctives and core values:

1. All members of the Church are "ministers" - The primary philosophy for ministries is that of GOING into the community/world instead of expecting the world to COME to a Church building to be served. It is not the desire of leadership to build unneeded programs/ministries to fit members into, but instead there is a desire to equip members to do works of ministry through the use of their spiritual gift(s). All Church members are viewed as ministers of the gospel, not just those which are the paid ministerial staff.
2. Local and global evangelism - Leadership is committed to fulfilling the great commission of evangelism and outreach through this local assembly. Local (city and surrounding communities) Regional (state) National (nation) mission emphases and Global (cross cultural/world) mission emphases are of high priority. Each believer is encouraged to witness to visitors, family members, friends, and those within our community both locally and abroad. See **Section 14.06**.
3. Giving personal invitations - Leadership believes the most effective evangelism happens through people inviting people. A life can reach another life. Each believer develops genuine relationships with friends and family and extends an invitation to them. It is our desire that Evangelism will become a natural lifestyle of winning others to Christ. This does not negate our intentional evangelism efforts through regular systematic training, door to door campaigns, and community evangelism efforts.

SECTION 15.07 STEWARDSHIP

The Church's leadership is committed to following these stewardship distinctives and core values:

1. A well-managed ministry with a priority on excellence - It is the desire of Leadership that the internal operations of this local assembly be handled in a "decent and orderly" manner which must be above reproach. The Church's business and financial operations will be managed at a level, which is a pacesetter for all Church members and the world to follow.
2. Major ministries in modest facilities - Since the Church is not brick or mortar, but men and women in Christ, a high priority will not be placed on the building of physical monuments. It is the desire of leadership to maintain major ministries within modest facilities. The financing of facility needs by the use of significant long-term debt is not the desire of leadership. An emphasis is being placed on putting financial resources in the lives of people instead of in buildings. This approach prevents continuous overhead costs accumulating in the Church's annual budget. Such accumulations would ultimately become an obstacle and hindrance for our future generations.
3. Members are viewed as managers - The ownership of every tangible resource on the face of this

earth belongs to God. Each member of this local assembly is considered a manager of their resources, which God has placed in their possession. Thus, financing the works of ministries within this local assembly is the obligation of each and every member within the body. The Church teaches its members to practice tithing for the financial support of Christ's Body, the Church, as God so commands. Therefore, tithing is an act of obedience and expression of love. Leadership recognizes that giving 10% of our income is the beginning Biblical standard of giving.

4. Equal access to God - Leadership is committed to the Priesthood of all believers. All born-again believers have equal access to God,, The Holy Spirit speaks to each believer, not just the elders, ministers, or ministry leaders. Each believer is encouraged to seek the Holy Spirit's leadership as ministry needs arise within the body and exercise wise stewardship means with his/her time, talent and money.

5. Communication and connection of all members - No body of believers should get to a size or structure, which would allow a member to be lost in the crowd. Ebenezer Baptist Church Small Groups, Sunday School, Deacon Family Groups and Ministry Teams are used as the primary means for communication and connection with each Church member. These Church groups operate under the supervision and direction of the Pastors/Elders and the Deacon Fellowship.

ARTICLE XVI: FISCAL YEAR AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

SECTION 16.01 FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.

SECTION 16.02 MONETARY PRINCIPLES

There is a Scriptural plan by which the work of the Lord is to be funded (Acts 20:35; Matthew 6:19-21). Conformity to this plan is a part of every believer's obedience as he gives to Christ, having first given his own self to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5; Hebrews 7:8). This plan calls for regular, universal (all members), and corporate, proportionate, spiritual giving (1 Corinthians 16:2). All members of the Church are asked to voluntarily contribute regular financial support (as commanded by scripture) to the Church and to the advancement of the projects it sponsors through a corporately designated budget. In determining the Lord's portion, we believe and affirm with the Scriptures that a minimum of one tenth (1/10) of each person's gross income should be faithfully and cheerfully given (2 Corinthians 9:6,7), and that giving beyond the tithe is encouraged, for all we have belongs to Christ (1 Chronicles 29:14,16; Malachi 3:10; Acts 4:32-35).

No monies are to be raised for the support of the Church and its various activities by any means except the Biblical plan of tithes, offerings, gifts and sacrificial love considerations for the Lord's work; unless authorized by the Senior Pastoral Staff, Fellowship of Deacons, and the Trustees.

From time to time the Church, in the exercise of its religious, educational and charitable purposes may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Designated giving sacrificially beyond the tithe to corporately agreed projects is always encouraged. Designated gifts to a missionary supported by the Church will be considered as over and above such support. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions will be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature; provided, however, if the donor specifies that the gift may only be used as directed and the Leadership determines that any such use would be inappropriate, the gift must be returned to the donor. All monies that are given to the Church, unless otherwise designated, shall be used for the general budgetary needs of the Church. It is the responsibility of the Trustees, The Financial Officer, Deacon Fellowship and the Pastoral Staff to honor gifts that are given for specific purposes; however this is not to be used by the contributor as a means of financial control of the Church or its financial stability. When such actions by a contributor are discerned, the Trustees, Fellowship of Deacons and the Senior Pastoral Staff shall have the authority to disperse the funds for the needs they deem necessary; whether towards a specific project or the general budgetary needs of the Church.

Numbered offering envelopes will be provided to encourage systematic, anonymous giving and

accurate accounting. A statement of contributions will be given each January to each donor by the financial secretary or the appropriate financial officer of the Church. A complete and detailed Financial Policy can be found in the Policy and Procedures Manual of the Church.

ARTICLE XVII: COMMITTEES

SECTION 17.01 STANDING COMMITTEES

Committees can be established by the Fellowship of Deacons, Trustees and the Senior Pastoral Staff. The purpose for establishing committees is to assist the Deacons, Trustees and Pastoral staff in doing the administrative works of ministry in a "decent and orderly" manner. Committees will possess certain authority and responsibility levels of the corporate Church as delegated by the Deacons, Trustees and Senior Pastoral Staff. Each approved committee will function under a Ministry Position Description. This description will outline their purpose and what duties and responsibilities have been delegated to them. Committees' functions will be primarily administrative in nature versus Ministry Teams whose primary functions are ministry in nature. Individuals serving on these committees will be selected by the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship and/or Trustees; and when deemed necessary; with the assistance of the Nominating Committee, which has been established by the Pastoral Staff. All Standing Committees members must be approved by the Church body at a regularly scheduled business meeting. Spiritual giftedness will be the primary qualification for service for each Committee's members. The Leadership of the Church feels that committees should be held to a minimum.

Any existing Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals of the Church shall disclose all Standing Committees and their appropriate Ministry Position Descriptions.

SECTION 17.02 ELECTION OF STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Election of committee members may be conducted in more than one (1) session. Regular elections shall be completed prior to January 1. Special elections may be held as needed. Persons elected at regular elections shall begin their service on January 1 immediately following their election, unless otherwise stated. Persons elected at special elections shall begin their ministry as soon as they are elected unless some other time is stated at the time of their election.

SECTION 17.03 ROTATION OF STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Election of active committee members for the Deacon Fellowship and the Trustees shall be based on the principle of a three (3) year rotation system, with a possible second three (3) year term and then a one (1) year minimum gap in service before serving another term. Ideally, one-third (1/3) of the members each year will be elected to a three (3) year term. All other committee members shall be elected to one year terms and persons who are appointed during a year shall serve only until the end of that year.

SECTION 17.04 UNEXPIRED TERMS OF STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

When a position is vacated prior to completion of the elected term, a person is to be elected to complete the unexpired portion of the term. He or she may be eligible for a new three (3) year term upon the completion of serving the unexpired term.

SECTION 17.05 ENLARGED MEMBERSHIP

When the size of an active committee is increased, one-third (1/3) of the additional members are to be elected for a one (1) year term, one-third (1/3) for a two (2) year term, and one-third (1/3) for a three (3) year term. Terms for a fractional portion of a year will exist when members are added at times other than for a January 1 assumption of service.

SECTION 17.06 LEADER'S ELIGIBILITY TO SERVE CONSECUTIVE TERMS:

1. Persons completing a second full three (3) year regular term on the Deacon Fellowship or the Trustees may not be nominated or re-elected to the same position until a one (1) year waiting period has passed. The one (1) year waiting period does not affect service in other positions and that person is eligible to be elected to any other position the following year.
2. Persons completing a partial term, but having less than three (3) years consecutive service on the same committee, may be re-elected to a term of three (3) years or less, without a one (1) year waiting period.
3. Members may have the one (1) year waiting requirements waived when the Deacon Fellowship, Trustees or Pastoral Staff makes such a recommendation to the Church and the Church approves the waiver of the one (1) year waiting requirement.
4. Two or more members of the same immediate family shall not serve on the same committee simultaneously without the specific approval of the Congregation after the disclosure of the relationship.

SECTION 17.07 SUPPORTING COMMITTEES

Additional supporting committees can be established by the Deacon Fellowship, Trustees and the Senior Pastoral Staff to assist in the evaluation of ministry. As opposed to Standing Committees, the Supporting Committees of the Church function only for a specified period of time and a specified purpose. The specified duration, purpose and members' names of all supporting committees must be in written format and presented to the Church body at the next regular Church business meeting.

SECTION 17.08 DESIGNATIONS OF COMMITTEES

All committees must be so designated as a standing or supporting committee when presented to the Church body.

SECTION 17.09 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

1. The Nominating Committee shall be a standing committee and shall consist of not less than seven persons. This Committee shall be appointed by the Pastor at the January quarterly business meeting and is charged with the responsibility to compile and present a list of candidates for all officers and ministry leadership positions that need to be filled during that year. All nominees for office must be from the Church membership, and in good standing. This nominating committee shall serve for one year, and shall nominate persons for any offices or leadership positions that become vacant during the year. Vacancies occurring during the third quarter of a year need not be filled until the October quarterly meeting, unless deemed necessary by the Pastoral Staff and Deacon Fellowship.

2. At the October business meeting the Nominating Committee shall, under the guidance of the Pastoral Staff and Deacon Fellowship, present a comprehensive list of all nominated officers and ministry team leaders and assistants for approval of the Church body. The list would include but not be exclusive of the following: Officers: (Deacons, Trustees, Church Clerk), Ministry Team Leaders and Assistants, Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Music Ministry, Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry, Seniors Ministry, Fair Ministry, Nursery Ministry, VBS Ministry, Audio/Visual Ministry, Celebrate Recovery Ministry, A/V Duplication Ministry, Web Page Ministry, Kitchen/Food Service Ministry, Greeter Ministry, Usher Ministry, FAITH Evangelism Ministry, On Mission Ministry and Missions Information Ministry.

At the July business meeting the Nominating Committee shall, under the guidance of the Senior Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, present a comprehensive list of all nominated Sunday School leaders (Teachers, Assistants, Children's Class Aides, Department Directors, and Sunday School Director(s)).

3. Assist the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship and Trustees with selection of Standing and Support Committee Members.

ARTICLE XVIII: ORDAINING, LICENSING AND COMMISSIONING OF MINISTERS, MISSIONARIES AND ALL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

SECTION 18.01 ORDAINATION QUALIFICATIONS

Any present member of this Church, or former member now serving in ministry at another location, who by his piety, zeal, and aptness to preach and teach gives evidence that he is called by God to the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 may, by a vote of a majority of the members present at any regular Church meeting, after examination by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Fellowship as to his Christian experience, be ordained or licensed by the Church to the Christian ministry.

SECTION 18.02 ORDAINATION PROCEDURES

1. Upon a conference with the Senior Pastor and after examination by the Deacon Fellowship and a vote of the majority of members present at any regular Church business meeting, the Pastor shall appoint an Ordination Council to examine and pass on the qualification of the candidate. The Ordination Council shall consist of ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.
2. If the candidate is found worthy of ordination by the Council, the Ordination Council may ordain the candidate on behalf of the Church.
3. The Pastor and the Deacon Fellowship shall arrange for the ordination service.

SECTION 18.03 COMMISSIONING MISSIONARIES

Any present member of this Church, or former member now serving in ministry at another location, who by his or her leading and convictions feel called by God to the work of missions may, by a vote of a majority of the members present at any regular Church meeting, and after examination by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Fellowship as to his or her Christian experience, be commissioned by the Church to missionary related service.

1. The Pastor and Deacon Fellowship shall oversee the arrangement and organization of the Missions Commissioning Services.
2. With the commissioning of missionaries comes a responsibility to hold each missionary accountable: spiritually, fiscally, and in all ministry aspects. The Church likewise carries a biblical responsibility to support the commissioned missionary through prayer and financial assistance.

SECTION 18.04 ANNUAL COMMISSIONING OF ALL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

At the appropriate service selected by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Fellowship after the annual election of officers, selection and appointment of all ministry leadership and after the fall selection and appointment of Sunday School Leadership, all of the above mentioned will be prayed over and commissioned for their selected time of service.

ARTICLE XIX: INDEMNIFICATION OF PASTORS, OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES AND OTHER AGENTS

SECTION 19.01 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Article,

Agent —Agent means any person who is or was a pastor, deacon, director, officer, trustee, employee, member, volunteer or other agent of the Church, or is or was serving at the request of the Church as a pastor, deacon, director, officer, trustee, employee or agent of another foreign or domestic corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, or was a pastor, deacon, director, officer, employee or agent of a foreign or domestic corporation that was a predecessor

corporation of the Church or of another enterprise at the request of such predecessor corporation.

Proceeding —Proceeding means any threatened, pending or completed action or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative.

Expenses —Expenses include, without limitation, all reasonable attorneys' fees court costs, expert witness fees and any other expenses incurred in the defense of any claims or proceedings against an agent by reason of his position or relationship as agent together with their reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and other expenses incurred in establishing a right to indemnification under this Article.

SECTION 19.02 SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE BY AGENT

To the extent that an agent of the Church has been successful on the merits in the defense of any proceeding referred to in this Article, or in the defense of any claim, issue, or matter therein, the agent shall be indemnified against expenses actually and reasonably incurred by the agent in connection with the claim. If an agent either settles any such claim or sustains a judgment rendered against him, then the provisions of **Sections 19.03 through 19.05** of this Article shall determine whether the agent is entitled to indemnification.

SECTION 19.03 ACTION BROUGHT BY PERSONS OTHER THAN THE CHURCH

Subject to the required findings to be made pursuant to **Section 19.05** below, the Church shall indemnify any person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party, to any proceeding other than action brought by, or in the right of, the Church, to procure judgment in its favor, an action brought under State or Federal law, by reason of the fact that such person is or was an agent of the Church for all expenses, judgments, fines, settlements, and other amounts actually and reasonably incurred in connection with the proceeding.

SECTION 19.04 ACTION BROUGHT BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH

Claims Settled Out of Court If any agent settles or otherwise disposes of a threatened or pending action brought by or on behalf of the Church, without court approval, the agent shall receive no indemnification for either amounts paid pursuant to the terms of the settlement or other disposition or for any expenses incurred in defending against the proceeding unless the payment of those items is approved by the action of the congregation.

Threatened Pending or Completed Actions Against Agent The Church shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action brought by or in the right of the Church, or brought under State or Federal law, to procure a judgment in its favor, by reason of the fact that the person is or was an agent of the Church, for all expenses actually and reasonably incurred in connection with the defense or settlement of that action, provided that both the following are met:

1. The determination of good faith conduct required by **Section 19.05** below, must be made in the manner provided for in that section; and
2. Where the agent has actually been adjudged liable to the Church in the performance of such person's duty to the Church, unless, and only to the extent that the court in which such proceeding is or was pending, shall, upon application, determine that, in view of all of the circumstances of the case, the agent is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for the expenses incurred. If the agent is found to be so entitled, the court shall determine the appropriate amount of expenses to be reimbursed.

SECTION 19.05 DETERMINATION OF AGENT'S GOOD FAITH CONDUCT

The indemnification granted to an agent in **Sections 19.03 and 19.04** of the Article is conditioned on the following:

Required Standard of Conduct The agent seeking reimbursement must be found, in the manner provided below, that he acted in good faith, in a manner he believed to be in the best interest of the Church, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use in similar circumstances. The termination of any proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of no contest or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a

presumption that the person did not act in good faith or in a manner which he reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the Church or that he had reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful. In the case of a criminal proceeding, the person must have had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful.

Manner of Determination of Good Faith Conduct The determination that the agent did act in a manner complying with **Section 19.05** above shall be made by:

1. The Deacon Fellowship and Trustees by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the Deacon Fellowship and Trustees who are not parties to the proceeding; or
2. Approval of the Church membership, with the persons to be indemnified not being entitled to vote thereon; or
3. The court in which the proceeding is or was pending. Such determination may be made on application brought by the Church or the agent or the attorney or other person rendering a defense to the agent whether or not the application by the agent, attorney or other person is opposed by the Church.

SECTION 19.06 LIMITATIONS

No indemnification or advance shall be made under this Article, except as provided in **Sections 19.02 or 19.05**, in any circumstances when it appears:

1. That the indemnification or advance would be inconsistent with a provision of the Articles of Incorporation, the Constitution and By Laws, a resolution of the Deacon Fellowship, Trustees or Church membership, or an agreement in effect at the time of the accrual of the alleged cause of action asserted in the proceeding in which the expenses were incurred or other amounts were paid, which prohibits or otherwise limits indemnification; or
2. That the indemnification would be inconsistent with any condition expressly imposed by a court in approving the settlement.

SECTION 19.07 ADVANCE OF EXPENSES

Expenses incurred in defending any proceeding may be advanced by the Church before the final disposition of the proceeding on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the agent to repay the amount of the advance unless it is ultimately determined that the agent is entitled to be indemnified as authorized in this Article.

SECTION 19.08 INSURANCE

The Trustees may adopt a resolution authorizing the purchase and maintenance of insurance on behalf of any agent of the Church against any liability asserted against or incurred by the agent in such capacity or arising out of the agent's status as such, whether or not the Church would have the power to indemnify the agent; provided, however, that the Church shall have no power to purchase and maintain such insurance to indemnify any agent of the Church for a knowing violation of State or Federal laws.

Article XX: INTEGRATED AUXILIARY MINISTRIES

Every ministry organization or society within this Church will be an integral part of the Church and not an entity in itself. They shall, therefore, have as their aims and objectives that of assisting the Church in discharging the obligations and responsibilities, which it has imposed upon itself. No such ministry shall have separate aims and objectives, which can act as divisive forces. The Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, and Trustees will preside over all such integrated auxiliary ministries, and may develop additional ministries as the need arises. The following is a list of possible integrated auxiliary ministries, which list is considered not to be exhaustive:

1. Any Sports Ministry
2. Counseling Ministry
3. Bible Institute
4. Vocational Ministry Retreat
5. Family Retreat Ministry

Article XXI: RECORD KEEPING RESPONSIBILITIES

SECTION 21.01 ACCOUNTS, BOOKS AND RECORDS

The Church shall maintain, at the minimum but not limited to, adequate and accurate books and records of accounts (financial records); written minutes of the proceedings of its membership, Deacon Fellowship, Trustees, staff, and committees; records of the membership of the Church, setting forth the members' names and addresses; and contribution records of contributors. All such records shall be kept at its principal place of business. The adequacy and accuracy of these records shall be overseen by the Trustees, Deacon Fellowship and the Church Clerk.

SECTION 21.02 ORGANIZATIONAL AND POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUALS

As noted in the Preamble to this Constitution and By Laws, this Constitution and By Laws is to provide —general guidance on organization, governance and operation, based upon biblical principles and practices. However, due to the size and complexity of the Church's organizational structure and ministry operations, at times it may become not only necessary, but also prudent, to provide —additional guidance regarding organizational and operational matters. This additional guidance shall be documented in official Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals. The Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, and the Trustees shall supervise the creation and amendment of any such official Church Organizational and/or Policies and Procedure Manuals; provided, however, that no such document may vary the terms of the Articles of Incorporation or this Constitution and By Laws without obtaining a ratifying vote of the congregation.

These manuals will be prepared as a guide to support all who serve in a leadership position at the Church. Their purpose is to aid in the effective and efficient functioning of individuals and groups and to optimize the fulfilling of the purpose of the Church. They provide guidelines and summary information about the Church's organizational structure and ministry operations. Those Manuals must only support and complement each of the Articles found in the Articles of Incorporation and this Constitution and By Laws.

Policy statements will be recommended and prepared by the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, and the Trustees who are responsible for the Church's various operations.

Procedures will be prepared primarily by staff that is charged with carrying out such ministry operations in accordance with the Church's existing policies. Policy statements must never become "canonized" and dictate but rather they must guide and protect the Church. The Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, and Trustees who are the primary bodies who oversee the Church's operations, will review and approve all policies and guard against policy statements which perpetuate emphases on yesterday and tradition, thwart innovative proposals, and inhibit efforts to build culturally appropriate ministries. Policies and procedures will be designed to provide reasonable assurance that the established ministry objectives/goals/values of the Church will be achieved in an orderly and timely fashion.

If a conflict between doctrine, philosophy of ministry, Church policies, operating procedures, position descriptions, or any other related organizational or operational matters of the Church arise, the content in these manuals shall address an appropriate method for solution. If these manuals do not address the conflict, then it must be brought to the attention of the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, and Trustees. In all matters the Scriptures are our premise for existence and operation thus becoming the overriding authority for resolving any conflict.

All policies that have been approved for change and any others that are under present review must be present to the Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, and Trustees before implementation can take place, unless waved by said groups.

The Pastoral Staff in conjunction with the Deacon Fellowship reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise unless otherwise so stipulated, any of the manuals' information from time to time, with or without notice, as they feel necessary and appropriate as so led by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is the Head of this body of believers.

These manuals shall be maintained by the staff person charged with administration and may consist of, but not exclusive of the following sections:

Organizational Manual

1. Primary Governing Documents
2. Philosophy of Ministry
3. Organizational Charts of Leadership and Ministry Structure
4. Leadership Position Descriptions
5. Ministry Descriptions
6. Music Policy
7. Conflict Resolution in Policy and Procedure

Policies and Procedures Manual

1. Leadership and Management
2. Personnel
3. Financial
4. Facilities
5. General Administration
6. Ministry

SECTION 21.03 INSPECTIONS OF RECORDS, REPORTS AND DOCUMENTATION

Every active member shall have the absolute right, at any reasonable time, to inspect the physical properties and all records, reports and documentation of every kind (with the exception of the records of personnel's salaries, contribution records and records of any confidential counseling sessions which have been conducted by or on behalf of the Church) of the Church. The Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship, and Trustees if necessary to maintain good order, may restrict and limit the number of inspections or establish an orderly manner for such inspection to be conducted.

However, in no event shall a reasonable inspection of the property, books and/or records be denied to any active member.

A copy of the Church's Organizational and/or Policies and Procedures Manuals shall be maintained in the Church Office for inspection by Church members. A single copy shall be provided without charge to any Church member who requests one.

SECTION 21.04 INTERNAL AUDITING/SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Pastoral Staff, Deacon Fellowship and Trustees will annually conduct internal audits for the primary purpose of providing: (1) assurance that the Church is operating its activities in an effective, efficient and safe manner which demonstrates the wise stewardship of time and material resources; (2) assurance that key risk areas of the Church are being managed by the use of adequate internal controls in its operational systems; (3) assurance that the financial disclosures made by the staff and Trustees of the Church reasonably portray the ministry's financial condition, results of operations, cash flow needs, and long-term commitments; and (4) assurance that the Church is (a) in reasonable compliance with pertinent laws and regulations, (b) is conducting its affairs ethically, and (c) is maintaining effective controls against leadership and employee conflicts-of-interest. Periodic reviews of organizational structures and the operating systems of the Church will be conducted to accomplish the assurances mentioned above.

Article XXII: AMENDMENTS TO AND INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS

SECTION 22.01 AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and By Laws or any provision may be altered, amended or repealed, and a new Constitution and By Laws may be adopted at any time by the church membership following the necessary protocol. The amendment must first be submitted to the Deacon Fellowship and Pastoral Staff in writing and signed by at least two members in good standing. The amendment must be read and tabled at the next regularly scheduled business meeting. It shall then be read again at the next regularly scheduled business meeting and must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the necessary quorum of membership present. The vote shall be by a standing vote unless there is a request at the meeting for a written ballot.

SECTION 22.02 INTERPRETATIONS

When a question of Biblical interpretation arises, the decision of the Senior Pastor and The Deacon Fellowship will be final because they will use as their governing authority the Bible. This Church stands upon the Inerrant, Infallible, Inspired, Authoritative Word of God which is the Bible and the Bible is the ultimate authority for the Church's organization, governance and operation.