

## ***Constitution of First Baptist Church of Lebanon, New Hampshire***

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# ***Constitution of First Baptist Church of Lebanon, New Hampshire***

## **ARTICLE I. Name**

The Name of this Church will be First Baptist Church of Lebanon, New Hampshire

## **ARTICLE II. Purpose**

The purpose of this Church shall be to love God and our neighbor by making disciples of Jesus Christ, teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded, and deploying them to serve Him in the world. The whole membership shall be engaged in this purpose through public worship, preaching and teaching, fellowship, mutual encouragement, evangelism and service to one another and the world.

## **ARTICLE III. Polity**

Its government shall be vested in the body, which includes all the Members of the Church. It shall nevertheless maintain its affiliation with The American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire and The American Baptist Churches of the United States of America.

## **ARTICLE IV. Covenant**

The Church accepts the Bible as the final authority for all matters of faith and practice and as the all sufficient basis for all its teaching. As a summary of principles for Christian living it adopts the following church covenant:

### Covenant of the First Baptist Church of Lebanon, New Hampshire

Since we are united by our faith in Christ and a common commitment to the Mission and Statement of Faith of The First Baptist Church of Lebanon, New Hampshire (FBC) we enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. With the Holy Spirit's help, we commit ourselves to grow in faith and obedience to Christ; and to love one another and encourage one another to live a life worthy of Jesus. We agree to support the ministry of FBC by participation in the gathered worship and fellowship of FBC, by following Christ as He leads us into ministry as part of the body, by praying for our brothers and sisters in the fellowship, by giving financially as God prospers us and by supporting the leaders in their ministry of shepherding us.

## ARTICLE V. Statement of Faith

A. The Bible - We believe the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God. While they are genuinely human documents, they are fully inspired by God so that the wording of Scripture is as the Holy Spirit intended. Because of God's hand the documents are without error in the original manuscripts in everything they affirm as true. Since God has providentially preserved His Word, we can trust the substantial authority of the existing texts of Scriptures in the original languages. They are the only authoritative standard for faith and practice for the Christian and all humanity.

B. The Trinity - We believe that God is one essence yet exists eternally in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They each have precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and each is worthy of the same trust and obedience. God is nevertheless numerically one.

C. The Creation - We believe that God alone is eternally self-existent. We believe He is the sole creator of the universe and that He created it by divine command. As creator, God is separate and distinct from His creation while being present throughout it. He sustains the creation and reveals His glory and majesty in part through what He created. He is Lord over creation and history; and sovereignly acts in all events to accomplish His own just and loving purpose. God gave humankind an earth-keeping mandate which makes us responsible as stewards over the creation.

D. Human Beings - We believe that God created human beings –male and female– in His image, all having value and purpose. God created them to find their happiness in a personal relationship with Him characterized by loving obedience. The first human beings disobeyed Him and became sinful. Every person has inherited this sinful disposition from them though they are responsible for their own sin. As a result of their sin, human beings stand under God's righteous condemnation and apart from His forgiveness will endure eternal separation from the presence of God and His blessing.

E. Jesus Christ - We believe that God, by His sovereign choice and out of love for human beings, sent His son Jesus Christ into the world to save human beings from the penalty and power of sin. We believe that Jesus Christ became a man and was fully human and fully God. He was born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life. He was crucified and died to pay the penalty for our sins. He was buried and raised bodily from the dead on the third day. He ascended to the Father's right hand –to the place of universal sovereignty. From there He will return bodily to the earth to fully establish His kingdom.

F. Salvation - We believe salvation is God's gift from the beginning to the end. Jesus died bearing God's righteous wrath in our place. His death is the only ground of our deliverance from the penalty for sin and our cleansing from the stain of our true moral guilt. The Holy Spirit uses the Gospel to bring about conviction of sin, repentance, and faith. Upon the basis of this repentance and faith, God confers forgiveness, cleansing and reconciliation to Himself. The Holy Spirit indwells and transforms the believer morally so that while he/she still has a sinful predisposition, God redirects the believer's mind, emotions and will to obedience to Him. The Holy Spirit equips the believer with spiritual gifts for serving God and enables the believer to grow toward spiritual maturity. When we see Him we shall be like Him.

G. The Church - We believe that the Church universal is all true believers of all time seen as an assembly. We believe that individual local churches that hold the Bible's teaching in faith and obedience are God's primary means of accomplishing His purpose for humankind. The Church –local and universal– exists for the glory of God through advancing His kingdom. This is achieved by: 1) leading men and women of all nations to faith in Christ and identification with Him through baptism; 2) building up and equipping the members of the body so that; 3) they obey all of Christ's teaching and live out His call in the Church and in the public square.

H. *The Christian Life* - We believe that a believer's duty is to use the means of grace to grow in the knowledge of God and His will and in love for God and human beings. The means of grace include: worship, fellowship with other believers, prayer, the Bible and the ordinances; all of which are primarily experienced in the context of the local church. We believe that every Christian has been endowed by the Holy Spirit with gifts to be used in accomplishing God's purpose for the Church.

I. *The Ordinances* - We believe that Jesus instituted Baptism and the Lord's Supper for His church to observe. Water baptism is the believer's willful and public act of identification with Christ by which the church acknowledges that a person belongs to the fellowship of Christ's church. It symbolizes God's saving work; it does not confer salvation. The Lord's Supper is a memorial meal in which believers take bread together to symbolize Christ's body broken for them and wine to symbolize Christ's blood shed for them. Like the word of God, these ordinances confer grace when united with the participants' faith, and not by mere performance. Any true and public believer can administer the ordinances.

J. *The Last Things* - We believe in the visible bodily return of Christ to the earth. We believe in the resurrection from the dead. We believe that God will judge righteously each person. He will grant eternal life and blessedness in His presence to all true believers in Christ. Unbelievers will suffer everlasting separation from God and His blessing because of their refusal to respond obediently to God's revelation. God shall reign forever and ever.

## **ARTICLE VI. Membership**

Section 1. Admission of Members - Persons may be received into membership by any of the following methods, subject to the recommendation of the Board of Shepherds and vote of the Church.

A. By baptism. Any person who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, affirms the confession of faith and supports the mission of First Baptist Church and is baptized as a believer may be received into membership.

B. By letter. Any person who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, affirms the confession of faith and supports the mission of First Baptist Church may be received by letter of transfer from another Baptist Church or any Church of similar faith and polity.

C. Restoration. Any person who has lost his membership at FBC for any reason may be restored by recommendation of the Shepherds and a vote of the Church.

### Section 2. Duties and Rights of Members

A. Each member is expected to be faithful to the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant (ARTICLE IV). A member has the right of full participation in the meetings of the Church, the right to make motions, to speak in debate and to vote. Only Members 18 years of age or older may vote to mortgage, lease, or transfer real property of the Church.

B. If a member fails in his/her Christian duty it is the responsibility of the Shepherds and other Members to attempt to restore the erring member to obedience to Jesus, in a spirit of love and meekness.

C. Individual Members may request in writing to be removed from the membership list. All such requests are to be addressed to the Shepherds.

### Section 3. Dismissal of Members

A. By Death

B. By Letter. Any member in good standing who desires a letter of transfer to another Church may receive it upon request, subject to the approval of the Shepherds.

C. By Excommunication. Any member may be dismissed for unrepentant sin if the process prescribed in the Bible and this constitution has been followed.

## ARTICLE VII. Church Governing Structure

Section 1. Pastor - The pastor shall preach and teach the Gospel, equip the saints for growth and ministry and lead the Church in accordance with the teaching of the following passages of Scripture: 2 Timothy; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:17-35; Mark 10:42-45; John 21:15-19; 1 Timothy and Titus. He shall be the leader of the Shepherds.

Section 2. Shepherds Board - The Shepherds Board is responsible for spiritual care and oversight of the Church. They are also responsible for leading the Church to fulfill its mission and purpose. The Shepherds and the Pastor will act as a team. Together they will form the Shepherds Board, a subset of the Board of Trustees (ARTICLE VII Section 4). The pastor will be the leader of the team, but together they will lead and act as a team. They will encourage one another and hold one another accountable. They will discharge the duties of spiritual oversight in concert.

A. Qualifications. The Shepherds must be Members in good standing. They must meet all the Qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

B. Election and Membership. Not counting the pastors who are Members of the Shepherds Board while they remain pastors of FBC, there will be five to twelve Shepherds. They will be nominated after due consideration of their qualifications by the Shepherds Board. This nomination must be approved by the full Board of Trustees and then by the Members at the annual meeting. They will be elected for three-year terms and may serve two consecutive terms before requiring a year off.

C. Duties.

1. Feeding and tending the flock (John 21:15-17; 1 Peter 5:2), teaching Christian doctrine and behavior and encouraging growth in Christian maturity.
2. Providing general oversight and leadership of all Church's ministries including overseeing the process of strategic ministry planning (1 Peter 5:1ff; John 21:16; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:17ff; and wherever the word overseer is used).
3. Equipping the church so that it grows in maturity and unity and can stand for the truth in a world full of error and use the truth in love (Eph. 4:11ff). This will include encouraging the congregation to discover and use their spiritual gifts in ministry.
4. Keeping watch and protecting the flock from error and sin (Acts 20:17ff; Titus 1:5-12) by teaching, admonition, encouragement, seeking those straying, and model.
5. Handling controversy and confronting error (Acts 15; Acts 20:17ff; Titus 1:5-12), including giving leadership to the process of Church discipline and handling grievances against leaders.
6. Assisting the pastor in conducting the worship services including serving the Lord's supper.
7. Equipping and encouraging and holding accountable the leaders of the Core Ministries of FBC (ARTICLE VIII).
8. Intentionally raising up and equipping future leaders for the Church and approving all leaders of core ministries and all teachers.
9. Selecting members of Pastoral Search Committees and submitting them to the Board of Trustees and Membership for approval.

D. Organization and Membership. The Shepherds Board will choose a chairperson and secretary each year. It will meet monthly. The secretary will chair any meetings that the chairperson cannot attend. Special meetings can be called by the chairperson or secretary as deemed necessary. A majority of Members constitutes a quorum. Every other month it will meet as part of the full Church Board.

Section 3. Finance Committee - The Finance Committee is responsible for the stewardship of the Church's finances and property. Specifically, they are called to see to it that, in obedience to Christ, the material resources of the Church serve the purpose, mission and ministry of FBC. They shall hold in trust all property belonging to the Church and take all necessary measures for its protection, management, and upkeep, upon due consultation with the Board of Trustees. The Committee will oversee and administer the approved budget. They shall be a subset of the Board of Trustees (ARTICLE VII, Section 4).

A. Qualifications. The Finance Committee must be Members in good standing and meet all the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:9-13. They must also demonstrate faith in God's ability to supply the material needs of His Church and its ministry.

B. Election and Membership. The Finance Committee will consist of the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, the Pastor, and at least one member at large. They will be selected by the existing Trustee Board and nominated after due consideration of their qualifications by the Shepherds Board. This nomination must be approved by the full Board of Trustees and then by the Members at the annual meeting. They will be elected for three-year terms and may serve two consecutive terms before requiring a year off. If needed, the Board of Trustees may appoint a Sexton to be a non-voting member of and accountable to the Finance Committee.

C. Duties.

1. Determine the use of the Church building, according to the *Building Use Policy*.
2. Have power to manage all assets of the Church including financial accounts, real and personal property. However, a vote of the Membership is required to mortgage, lease, or transfer any real property. In exercising this authority, it will give due attention to the attitudes of the congregation and in important cases seek the counsel of the Shepherds in a Board of Trustees meeting.
3. Designate the bank(s) where funds are deposited.
4. Evaluate and recommend the personnel needs to support the Church and the Parsonage. It will secure the custodial services and will perform other duties as directed by the Church and the State. Except as otherwise provided herein, the committee shall exercise the responsibility to engage or terminate paid employees of the Church, after due consultation with the Board of Trustees.
5. Solicit budget requirements of the standing boards and core ministries, three months prior to the Annual Meeting, and will collate requests to present a working budget to the Board of Trustees one month prior to the Annual Meeting for review and approval. At the Annual Meeting the Members will vote to adopt the budget or amend it at a special business meeting.

D. Organization and Membership. The committee will choose a chairperson and secretary each year. It will meet monthly, as needed. The secretary will chair any meetings that the chairperson cannot attend. Special meetings can be called by the chairperson or secretary as deemed necessary. A majority of Members constitutes a quorum. Every other month it will meet as part of the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. Board of Trustees - The Board of Trustees, under Christ, is responsible for seeking to unite the Church in accomplishing its purpose and mission and seeing to it that its mission and ministries (ARTICLE VIII) are fully resourced.

A. Membership. The Board of Trustees shall consist of all the Shepherds Board and the Finance Committee.

B. Organization. The Board shall choose a chairperson and secretary each year. It will meet bi-monthly. In the absence of the Chairperson, the meeting will be chaired, in succession, by the Chairperson of the Shepherds Board, then the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. A majority of both the Shepherds and a majority of the Finance Committee constitute a quorum. Special meetings can be called by the Chairperson of this Board or by an agreement of the Chairpersons of both the Shepherds and Finance Committee or more than two members of the Board of Trustees.

C. Duties.

1. Seek God's guidance in all decisions using the resources of Scripture and Prayer
2. Develop plans for providing resources to implement the Church's mission and ministries.
3. Work at creating consensus in the congregation in achieving its mission and ministries.
4. Set the agenda for all Church wide business meetings.
5. Nominate a member of the Board of Trustees to moderate each year's business meetings. The nominee must be approved by the Members at the annual business meeting as a subset of the Nomination Report.
6. Appoint a Clerk to take and publish minutes for each of the business meetings. The Clerk must be a member in good standing. The minutes are to be reviewed at the next business meeting for approval.
7. Approve the final budget proposal in time for it to be given to the congregation for discussion and approval by the Members at the annual business meeting.
8. Approve all new core ministries recommended by the Shepherds.
9. Approve all church wide strategic ministry plans presented by the Shepherds before they go to the Members for approval; and work to create a consensus in the congregation for all such approved plans.
10. Approve all ad hoc committees whose task has Church-wide impact and to provide a plan for financing the work of the approved committees.

Section 5. Treasurer - A Treasurer will be elected at each Annual Meeting for one year. The Treasurer must be a Member in good standing and meet all the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:9-13. The Treasurer will have custody of the Church's funds and all deposits made in its name, and all checks drawn on its accounts. The Treasurer shall have custody of all securities, investments, title papers and other financial documents of the Church. The Treasurer will be a member of the Finance Committee.

The Treasurer will present to the church an itemized report of receivables and disbursements, showing the Church's actual financial condition at each annual meeting, or as requested by any member. The Treasurer may make other financial reports as requested by the Church, Finance Committee, or Board of Trustees, and promptly deliver all records to his or her successor. Due diligence should be applied to having the accounts routinely audited by professional auditors.



*Section 6. Financial Secretary* - A Financial Secretary will be elected at each Annual Meeting to serve one year. The Financial Secretary must be a Member in good standing and meet all the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:9-13. The Financial Secretary will keep a record of all contributions; and keep a correct account between the Church and its members. He/she will make deposits in a timely manner and give a monthly report to the Church's treasurer. At the end of the fiscal year, the Financial Secretary will issue an income report for inclusion in the annual report. The Financial Secretary will be a member of the Finance Committee.

*Section 7. Clerk* - A Clerk will be appointed by the Board of Trustees following each Annual Meeting to serve one year. The Clerk must be a Member in good standing and meet all the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:9-13. The Clerk will keep a certified record of all business meeting agendas, warnings and minutes, as well as Church Membership records and baptisms. The Clerk shall have authority to certify as necessary to third parties as to the accuracy of Church membership records, meeting minutes, constitution and bylaws in effect, and as to current officers and board members. The position of Clerk shall not be by itself a position on the Board of Trustees, but the individual serving in that capacity shall not be excluded from being on the Board of Trustees in another elected capacity.

*Section 8. Sexton* - A Sexton may be appointed by the Board of Trustees following each Annual Meeting to serve one year. The Sexton will be a non-voting member of and accountable to the Finance Committee. The Sexton must be a Member in good standing and meet all the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:9-13. The Sexton will primarily be responsible for the day-to-day care and maintenance of the Church property so that it serves the mission and ministry of First Baptist Church to the glory of God. Since the actual duties of the Sexton are dynamic, a separate job description will be maintained by the Finance Committee outlining the specific duties to be performed.

## **ARTICLE VIII. Church Ministries**

Section 1. Core Ministries - These are ministries which the Shepherds and the congregation consider essential for the life and identity of the Church.

- A. Designating a Core Ministry. The Shepherds can launch new core ministries or recommend that an existing ministry become a core ministry, by submitting their recommendations to the Church Board for approval and then receiving the approval of the Members at a business meeting.
- B. Current Core Ministries.
  - 1. Worship Team
  - 2. Children and Youth Ministry
  - 3. Community Care Outreach
  - 4. Small Group Ministry
  - 5. Congregational Care Team
  - 6. Welcome Ministry
- C. Leadership of a Core Ministries.
  - 1. Qualifications. Leaders of the core ministries must be Members in good standing and will meet all the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:9-13.
  - 2. Selection. They will be appointed by the Shepherds and approved by the Members.
  - 3. Funding. Their leaders will submit budget requests to the Trustees as stipulated in ARTICLE VII, Section 3 C. 5.
  - 4. Accountability - A Shepherd will be assigned to encourage each core ministry and help them be faithful to the Bible's directives and the mission of the Church. The leaders of each Core Ministry will report to the congregation on their ministry at the annual meeting.

Section 2. Other Ministries - Any member in good standing can launch a ministry and recruit from the congregation to serve with him/her as long as it meets the following stipulations:

- A. The ministry is consistent with the Bible and the mission of FBC.
- B. The ministry does not directly compete with a core ministry of FBC.
- C. The ministry does not require money from the Church. If Church financial support is required, the ministry will need approval of the Church Board.
- D. Any question about any of the above will be handled by the Shepherds.

## **ARTICLE IX. The Pastorate**

Section 1. Calling a Pastor - When the pastorate is vacant, the Church Board will appoint a representative pulpit committee of five members. The committee will take the necessary steps to secure a pastor in full cooperation with the regional minister of the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire. It will prayerfully assess the merits of each person including his/her character, education, ministerial record, preaching ability and understanding of call and "fit" for FBC and Lebanon to determine if God is calling him/her to this pastorate. When a candidate is agreed upon, the person will be recommended to the Church for Member approval.

Section 2. Calling an Associate Pastor - When the Shepherds and the pastor(s) determine that an Associate Pastor is necessary to accomplish the Church's ministry they will make a recommendation for hiring to the Church Board. If the recommendation is approved, the Church Board will present the proposal to the congregation in a formal business meeting to get member approval for this new position. Upon approval the Church Board will appoint a representative pulpit committee of five members and the Pastor, who will serve as an ex-officio member of the committee. The committee will take the necessary steps to secure a candidate in full cooperation with the regional minister of the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire. It will prayerfully assess the merits of each person including his/her character, education, ministerial record, preaching ability and understanding of call and "fit" for FBC and Lebanon to determine if God is calling him/her for this pastorate. When a candidate is agreed upon, the person will be recommended to the Church for Member approval.

### Section 3. Principles of Relationship Between Pastors and the Congregation

- A. Pastoral Leadership is based on three pillars: 1) a fundamental assumption of equality among Christians under God; 2) love of the pastor for the flock with all the openness and warmth of family affection; 3) servanthood (Mt. 23:8-12; 1 Thess. 2:7-12; Mark 10:42-45).
- B. Pastoral Leadership is Bible centered. Its heart is exposition of the Bible. In leading the Church, he uses it to encourage, teach, equip, and persuade. The Pastor brings the Bible into the discussion of direction and quotes it and expounds it in order to persuade and convince people on any given issue (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Timothy and Titus).
- C. Pastoral Leadership must have unity in obedience to Christ as its goal (Phil. 2:1-16; Eph. 4:1-6). This means the pastor must work to create a consensus for ministry direction.
- D. Pastoral Leadership is committed to multiplying lay leadership in ministry. Ministry is for every Christian (2 Timothy 2:2; Eph 4:11-16).
- E. A congregation is responsible to voluntarily respond in submission to pastoral leadership, with love and esteem (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17).
- F. A congregation is responsible to adequately compensate pastors. The standard is that they should be able to live with a similar lifestyle as the average member of the congregation in their station of life (Galatians 6:6). They should also be rewarded financially for good work especially the work of preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17).

Section 4. Responsibilities of the Pastor

- A. The Pastor is the spiritual leader of the congregation.
- B. The Pastor will preach/teach the Gospel and have overall responsibility for the worship services and administering the ordinances.
- C. The Pastor will encourage, develop, and empower a broad base of lay leadership.
- D. The Pastor will be available for pastoral visitation, counsel, and spiritual direction.
- E. The Pastor is an ex-officio member of all boards and committees.
- F. The Pastor has the authority to coordinate daily church operations in accordance with the Trustees' guidance.
- G. The Pastor will be involved with the broader denomination, church, and community, as time allows.
- H. The Pastor will teach the Church to embrace all that the Bible says about ministry.
- I. The Pastor will subscribe to the code of ethics of the American Baptist Minister's Council.

Section 5. Associate Pastor's Responsibilities - The Associate Pastor will be under the direct supervision of the Pastor. The Associate Pastor will contribute to the life of the Church in a manner that compliments the Pastor.

Section 6. Termination of a Pastorate - The term of office may be ended upon 90-day notice on the part of the pastor or the Church. If the pastor tenders his/her resignation it may be accepted by the Church Members at a formally called business meeting. A quorum of the Members present is required for acceptance of the pastor's resignation. If a pastor's dismissal is initiated by the Church Board, then the process outlined in ARTICLE X, Section 4.C. must be followed.

## ARTICLE X. Discipline and Grievances

### Section 1. General Principles

- A. The following Scripture should guide the Church and its officers in handling issues of discipline and grievance: Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 17:1-10; Galatians 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:17-25
- B. The goal of all Church Discipline and investigation of all grievances is restoration of the erring brother/sister to God and to the Church.
- C. Humility, patience, and love must be exercised in these matters.
- D. Favoritism and prejudgment must be avoided.
- E. For the Shepherds to take up a case of Church discipline mentioned in the New Testament (e.g., Matthew 18:15-17) the sin at issue must, in the opinion of the Shepherds Board, be both serious and long standing; or, if not long standing, so serious that it endangers the peace or testimony of the Church.
- F. For a grievance against a leader to be taken up by the Shepherds Board the grievance must, in the opinion of the Board, be either serious or be a threat to the peace of the Church.

### Section 2. A Brother or Sister Caught in a Sin

- A. The Shepherds Board should not take up the case unless the following steps have been taken:
  - 1. A brother/sister has confronted the one in sin just between the two of them and due time has been given for the sinning brother/sister to consider the counsel and repent; but he/she has refused. (In extraordinary cases, the Pastor or one of the Shepherds can aid a brother/sister in carrying out this step by going with them if the Pastor or Shepherd is convinced the report is true and serious, and convinced that this brother/sister has good reason to fear talking to the erring brother/sister alone.)
  - 2. One or two others have gone to the first brother/sister and confronted him/her, given him/her due time to consider the counsel and repent, and he/she has again refused.
  - 3. The two (or three) come to the Pastor or a Shepherd and request his/her help for the erring brother/sister.
- B. Upon receiving a request as above, the Shepherds should investigate the issue and, if the sin is long standing and serious, two or three of them should confront the brother/sister.
- C. If due time is given for repentance and he/she still refuses to repent, the Shepherds Board should recommend that the congregation warn the brother/sister, by letter, that continuing refusal to repent will result in dismissal from Church Membership. This recommendation must come from a unanimous vote of the board. (If a member of the board is the brother/sister in question, then he/she cannot vote).
- D. If the congregation votes to warn the erring brother/sister and after due time to consider the warning the brother/sister still refuses to repent, the congregation should dismiss the brother/sister from Church membership by a vote of the Church. The vote must be by two thirds of the Members at the meeting.

### Section 3. A Pastor or Shepherd Caught in Sin

- A. In the case of the Pastor or a Shepherd caught in sin the steps in Section 2.B. above must be taken, but once the Shepherds have confronted the Pastor or Shepherd the issue must be taken up by the Congregation -- even if there is repentance, (1 Timothy 5:19-22).
- B. In the case of repentance, the Shepherds Board will recommend termination of the leadership role and steps for restoration of the erring Pastor or Shepherd to be approved by the Members.
- C. If there is no repentance, the Shepherds Board should make a recommendation to the congregation of termination of the leadership role and dismissal from Church membership (see above). If the leader in question is a Pastor, he/she can be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the Members at a regular or special business meeting. The meeting must have 50% of the membership present. If 50% is not present, the Church Board, by unanimous vote, may invoke Roberts Rules of Order to suspend the quorum requirements and continue a legal meeting of the Church. The notice of such a meeting must be in writing to the membership 30 days prior to the date of the proposed meeting and read from the pulpit on two successive Sundays prior to the proposed business meeting.

### Section 4. Grievance against a Leader

- A. The Shepherds Board should not take up the case unless the following steps have been taken:
1. A brother/sister has confronted the leader concerning the grievance between the two of them and due time has been given for him/her to consider the counsel, but he/she has refused to alter his/her behavior.
  2. One or two others have gone with the first brother/sister and confronted him/her, given him/her due time to consider the counsel and he/she has again refused to alter his/her behavior.
  3. The two (or three) come to the Pastor or a Shepherd and request help for the leader.
- B. Upon receiving a request as above, the Shepherds should consider the merits of the case, confront the leader if necessary and ask the leader to resign if they consider it warranted. The decision to ask for a resignation must come from a unanimous vote of the board. (If a member of the board is the person in question, he/she may not vote).
- C. If the leader refuses to resign the Shepherds should recommend that the congregation dismiss the leader in question from leadership. This recommendation must come from a unanimous vote of the board. (If a member of the board is the person in question, he/she cannot vote).
1. If the leader in question resigns, the case ends there.
  2. If he/she refuses to resign the leader can be dismissed by two thirds vote of the Members at a regular or special business meeting.
  3. If the leader is a pastor, the meeting must have 50% of the membership present. If 50% is not present, the Church Board, by unanimous vote, may invoke Roberts Rules of Order to suspend the quorum requirements and continue a legal meeting of the Church. The notice of such a meeting must be in writing to the membership 30 days prior and read to the pulpit on two successive Sundays prior to the proposed business meeting.

## **ARTICLE XI. Elections**

SECTION 1. Time. The annual election of officers shall be at the Church's Annual Meeting.

SECTION 2. Qualifications of Voters. All matters pertaining to the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of real property shall be voted on only by Members in good standing who are of legal age. On all other matters, Members in good standing are entitled to vote. (Legal age being 18 years of age and older.)

SECTION 3. Procedure. At least one week before the election, the Church Board will present the church with its annual nominations for officer and board positions. At the time of the Annual Meeting, it will be the privilege of any member present and qualified to vote to place in nomination the name of any eligible person for any office or board. A majority of ballots cast is necessary for the election of a nominee.

## **ARTICLE XII. Meetings**

### SECTION 1. Worship Services.

- A. Public services shall be held each Sunday at a time fixed by the Shepherds Board and approved by the Church.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday morning of each month, or at such other times as the Shepherds Board may determine.
- C. Other services may be arranged by the Pastor, the Church Board, the Shepherds Board, or by a majority vote of the church membership at a called business meeting.

### SECTION 2. Business Meetings.

- A. A quorum for the transaction of business shall be 25% of the membership. In the event a quorum is not present, the Church Board may invoke a suspension of the quorum per Roberts Rules of Order.
- B. The Annual Business Meeting shall be held on the last Sunday in April for the purpose of receiving the annual reports of individual officers, boards, and committees of the church and its auxiliary organizations; the election of officers and board positions; and the transaction of such other business as is proper to come before this meeting. The Church Board has the authority to alter the Annual Meeting date, as required. A warrant setting forth time, place, and business to be transacted shall be posted by the Clerk in a conspicuous place in the church and notice placed in the weekly calendar at least two (2) weeks preceding the Annual Meeting.
- C. A special meeting for the transaction of church business may be called by the clerk upon the request of the Pastor, Church Board, Shepherds Board, Trustees Board, or upon written request of ten (10) voting Members of the Church; provided a notice of same stating business to be transacted is posted in a conspicuous place in the church and/or in the weekly calendar at least two Sundays previous to the meeting. The church may, without notice, at any regular meeting of worship, act upon the reception of Members, granting letters of dismissal, and upon appointment of delegates to councils, provided only that the transaction of such business is not in conflict with any provisions of these By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE XIII. Church Year**

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **ARTICLE XIV. Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended or a new Constitution adopted at any regular or special meeting of the church by a two-thirds vote of those Members present provided a quorum is met, and provided that due notice is given that such action is to be introduced at such a meeting. For the purpose of this ARTICLE, due notice may consist either of written notice mailed to the membership approximately thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting, or by notice in the weekly calendar on not less than three (3) successive Sundays immediately prior to the date of such meeting.

### Revisions:

0 – adopted 05/02/2021 by membership vote; Newly drafted document, replaces any prior editions.  
1 – 05/01/2022 by membership vote; (Article VII.3.B & 5) Treasurer is a voting member of Trustees Board, (Article VIII.1.B.6) Renamed Ministry, (Article XII.2.B) updated Business Meeting date.  
2 – 02/11/2024 by membership vote; updated Article VII to reflect new Board/Committee naming convention and added Sexton role as Section 8.