

Calvary Baptist Church

Constitution

(revised 4-2022)

Preamble

We, the members of Calvary Baptist Church do declare and establish this constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and so that this body may be governed in a scriptural and orderly manner. As members of Calvary Baptist Church we voluntarily and solemnly submit ourselves to the following articles of this constitution.

It is hereby resolved that upon the church's acceptance of this constitution, all previous constitutions, rules and regulations, or by-laws, will be declared void and invalid. This constitution will serve as the only articles of government of this church. – Dated December, 2021.

Article 1: Church Name

This body of Christ shall be known as Calvary Baptist Church.

Article 2: Church Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God and for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose of all its activities. We will seek to glorify the God of Scripture (Eph. 3:21) by promoting His worship (John 4:23,24; 1 Cor. 3:16,17; 1 Pet. 2:5); edifying and equipping the saints (1 Cor. 12:27,28; 14:12,18,19,26; Eph. 4:11-16); spreading the gospel of Christ both locally and worldwide (Mat. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; Acts 13 & 14); seeking whenever possible to both plant and strengthen other churches, promoting biblical faithfulness and purity in all the assemblies of Christ (Acts 15:36,41; Acts 16:5; Jude 3); and seeking to minister relief to the needy, especially among the saints (Rom. 15:26,27; Gal. 2:10; Gal. 6:10).

Article 3: Church Confession of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and infallible word of God and is therefore the basis for any Statement of Faith. However, since most churches (even some heretical

ones) subscribe to the above statement, we believe it is both prudent and useful to adhere to certain biblical statements and confessions in order that the doctrinal beliefs of this church may be clearly known. Calvary Baptist Church chooses for its statement of faith the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. We consider this document to be an excellent expression of the teaching of the Word of God. We find it to be a confirmation of faith, a means of edification, an aid in controversy, and a basis for church unity. However, we acknowledge without hesitation or reservation that the Scriptures alone are God-inspired, and therefore must be the supreme authority in all matters of belief and practice.

Article 4: Church Covenant

Section 1: Our New Covenant Confidence

God has graciously entered into a New Covenant with His people (Jer. 31:31-34; 32:40; Heb.8:7-13; 10:16, 17; 13:20, 21) through the work of Jesus Christ (Heb.8:6), whose obedience and blood infallibly secure all of its benefits for them (Mat. 26:26-28; Heb. 13:20, 21). By making us members of the one body of Christ (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:25), the New Covenant lays upon us responsibilities, not only to God, but also to each other. In this covenant God writes His law upon our hearts and causes us to walk in His ways. Thus, both our desire and ability to obey God spring from the work of Jesus Christ. Christ purchased for us the Holy Spirit, by whose gift of faith we obey, not to establish our own righteousness before God but to express our gratitude for grace. Calvary Baptist Church exists on the basis of the New Covenant and as a local expression of the power and grace of God in that covenant. In our church covenant we confess both our joyful faith in the God of the New Covenant, our Savior, Jesus Christ, and our willing embrace of its obligations. These New Covenant obligations require that we love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. By the grace of that covenant, we commit ourselves to the following obligations:

Section 2: Our New Covenant Commitments

1. Our Commitment to God - By the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and the free grace of our Lord, we will seek to glorify the Lord our God in all we think, say, feel and do. We will strive to love Him with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to live before Him in such

manner as will honor Him and display His love in our worship, walk and witness.

A. We agree to worship God (1) only (2) scripturally (3) sincerely and (4) regularly.

1. We agree to worship only the one true and living God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), who has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures, only through the mediation of God the Son.

2. We will worship God in His appointed way in the Scriptures, excluding from our worship anything that He has not commanded while conscientiously observing those duties and ordinances of the New Covenant

3. We will worship God sincerely, avoiding drawing near to Him with lips only, but offering that true heart worship which He seeks from us.

4. We will worship God regularly, faithfully observing that public and corporate worship which He commands on the Lord's Day, while also being diligent to attend all the stated services of the church, except when providentially hindered.

B. We agree to walk before God in Biblical holiness of heart and life. We recognize the seriousness of taking upon ourselves the name of the one true God in our baptism and church membership. We agree not to take that glorious name lightly, but rather to adorn our profession with honor by ever seeking a closer walk with God through the means of grace which He has appointed, including not only our faithful attendance at public worship, but also the maintaining of both private Bible study, prayer, and family worship. We will also pursue the salvation and sanctification of our children and other loved ones, by instructing them in God's truth, while also seeking to exemplify that truth in our godly walk before them.

C. We further commit to honor God by our witness in this world, resisting the sins of this present evil age, while zealously endeavoring both by holy lives and faithful words to advance the Kingdom of Christ in this world by making known everywhere the one true God and the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. Our Commitment to Men - We will seek to love our neighbors as ourselves.

A. We will love one another in this church according to the Scriptures.

1. We will care for each other in temporal things, rejoicing together in God's blessings, bearing one another's burdens and seeking whenever possible to actively relieve each other in our trials and sufferings.

2. We will care for each other spiritually, watching over one another's souls. We will each seek to help others on the way to heaven, not only by praying for each other, but also by scripturally encouraging and admonishing one another.

3. We will work diligently for the peace of our assembly by maintaining loving relationships with each other. We will seek to avoid sinning against each other in any way, and be quick to repent and seek forgiveness when we have done so. We will be slow to take offense, forbearing with one another, and always ready for reconciliation in conflict, being mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

4. We covenant to diligently, sincerely and actively promote the well-being of our church, seeking to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrine and discipline. We will cheerfully submit to the Christ-appointed leaders of the church, while contributing cheerfully and regularly to the support of its ministry. We will endeavor to do all within our power to make our church that which the Head of the church desires it to be.

B. We will love our neighbors who are not part of our church.

1. We will love all of our Christian neighbors, realizing that all true brothers in Christ are part of the same household of faith (Gal. 6:10). While seeking to faithfully hold to what we are convinced is taught in Holy Scripture, we will avoid all unholy sectarianism, seeking as far as possible to pursue and maintain the highest degree of friendship and fellowship, while also promoting the temporal and spiritual welfare of all of the family of God.

2. We will love our unsaved neighbors, seeking also their temporal well-being. But we will especially, according to Christ's great commission, seek to make disciples of the lost by clearly and faithfully sharing the saving gospel with them. We will also endeavor to walk before them in true holiness so that we may adorn the saving gospel we share with them. We engage moreover to

promote the spread of the gospel of Christ worldwide, by our prayers, finances, and whatever other scriptural means are available to us.

3. We voluntarily and joyfully enter into this covenant, humbly acknowledging our remaining sin and shortcomings, but with prayerful dependence on the Omnipotent Spirit of God who is able to work in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight. We enter this covenant with a serious desire to please our God by keeping it to the best of our God-given ability. If the providence of God should move us from this church, we will endeavor to unite with some other faithful church where we can carry out the duties of this covenant.

Article 5: Church Membership

Section 1: General Statement

This is an Elder ruled Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

Section 2: The Justification for Church Membership

A genuine Christian's commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ is inseparable from his commitment to His truth and His people. This commitment ordinarily requires a formal, open, voluntary, solemn and enduring commitment to membership in a local church. Following are some proofs of the existence of the local church which Christ ordained for His own glory and worship, and also for the spiritual benefit of His people, which shows the justification for every true Christian to seek membership therein:

(1) The New Testament presents the local church as a distinct and defined group of individuals covenanted together to worship God and carry out the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ. The local church is made up of individuals who may be counted (Acts 2:41,42; Acts 4:4), added to (Acts 2:47; 5:14), and even subtracted from (Mat 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:12,13; 2 Cor. 2:6).

(2) Each local church of Christ is called upon to select leaders and representatives from among itself (Acts 6:1-6; Acts 15:22; 2 Cor. 8:19,23), thus making it a formal organization with recognized officers (Phil. 1:1; Acts

14:23).

(3) Fulfillment of the great commission requires church membership (Mat 28:18-20). In this commission there is an inseparable connection between making disciples, baptizing them, and then teaching them all things that Christ has commanded. It is clear from the Scriptures that the Apostles implemented this commission by gathering baptized disciples into local churches where they were taught all the things that Christ had commanded (Acts 2:38-42; 1 Cor. 4:1-7; Titus 1:7).

(4) The whole of the New Testament presents a picture of disciples of Christ worshiping and serving Him in connection with some local church. We believe this is what Christ intends for His disciples to the end of the age.

Section 3: Expectations of Church Members

Members of Calvary Baptist Church are expected

- (1) first and foremost, to have a good confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- (2) to have obeyed the Lord Jesus in the ordinance of believer's baptism;
- (3) to be faithful in all the duties essential to the Christian life;
- (4) to attend regularly the stated services of the church unless providentially hindered;
- (5) to submit cheerfully to the eldership of the church (Heb. 13:17);
- (6) to give cheerfully to its support and its causes as God has prospered them;
- (7) to participate in its organized work and make available to the church such talents and abilities as God has endowed them with.

Section 4: Candidacy and Reception

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in Calvary Baptist Church. We understand the Scriptural priority of serving the Lord in one of His churches and therefore welcome any and all persons who are Biblically qualified to join with us. However, we also recognize the vital importance of keeping the Lord's church sound in doctrine and holy in practice, and therefore we desire all potential members to understand and meet those biblical qualifications. Members are to be received only upon the

recommendation of the elder(s) and by the consent of the church.

The method of receiving members into Calvary Baptist Church will be according to the addendum “Becoming a Member.”

Section 5: Termination of Membership

As is the case with receiving members, so the termination of church membership must be governed by biblical principles. Accordingly, membership in Calvary Baptist Church will be terminated in one of the following three ways:

1. Death - Physical death obviously warrants the removal of membership from the church roll.
2. Transfer of membership to another church - since the New Testament norm for all Christians is that they be members of true local churches, any person leaving the membership of should seek to transfer membership to another true church as soon as possible. We realize that this process may sometimes require a transitional period, and the elders will take such things into account when dealing with a member's transfer of membership. It will be the duty of the elders to handle transfer of membership in a way that accords with scriptural principles.
3. Exclusion
 - A. Exclusion, without need of discipline - In some cases, a person's membership may need to be terminated for reasons which, in the judgment of the church, may not warrant discipline. Such cases may include the resignation of a member who concludes that he is not a Christian; the resignation of a member who requests to be relieved from his church covenant obligations for reasons that the church or its Elders may deem satisfactory; or the relocation of a member who no longer remains in contact with the church; or a member who no longer regularly attends our meetings. The church shall exclude such persons from its membership role, without the exercise of church discipline.
 - B. Exclusion by excommunication - According to Holy Scripture, a

church must exclude from its membership any person who persists in holding or teaching serious doctrinal heresies, or who persists in conduct which is either publicly scandalous, or blatantly inconsistent with his Christian profession, or who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of the church (Mat. 18:15ff; 1 Cor. 5:1 ff; Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10, 11).

Excommunication should ordinarily be a last resort of the church, and should not be exercised until milder forms of biblical discipline have been meekly, lovingly and prayerfully utilized in a sincere effort to restore the offending member. Such restorative efforts may include public verbal reproof (Mat. 18:17; 1 Tim. 5:20), and temporary suspension of certain privileges of church membership, such as the right to vote or participate in the Lord's Supper (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 Thess. 3:6,14).

When other scriptural means of restoring an offender have failed, the church must be willing to excommunicate an offending member (Mat. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:13). Persons may be excommunicated only by a majority vote of the church (2 Cor. 2:6). As stated above, excommunication should ordinarily be a last resort. However, since some cases of sin (either moral or doctrinal) are so scandalous, gross and heinous in their nature, the church has a Scriptural right and mandate to immediately excommunicate those guilty of such sins if the honor of Christ and His church necessitate this.

All acts of church discipline, including excommunication, must be lovingly carried out for the glory of Christ, the welfare and purity of the church (1 Cor. 5:6), with the goal of eventually restoring the offender to good standing in the church (2 Cor. 2:7).

Section 6: Restoration to Membership

Since full restoration is the goal of all church discipline, all members of the church should unite in its exercise when necessary, praying earnestly for God's gracious, restorative blessing upon those who have been disciplined. It is also both the duty and privilege of the church to forgive and to restore to full membership a disciplined or excommunicated member upon satisfactory evidence of repentance (2 Cor.2: 6-8). Thus any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of this church upon evidence of his repentance and reformation.

Article 6: Church Officers

Section 1: General Statement

Jesus Christ alone is Head of His church (Col. 1:18). He has ordained that local churches should be governed by Himself through leaders whom He appoints (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11) and who are endowed by His Spirit with the graces and gifts needed to accomplish their work (I Cor. 15:9-10). Because Christ appoints church leaders, they have authority (II Cor. 13:10) and their authority is limited by Him in the Scriptures (I Cor. 14:36-38; III John 9). There are two kinds of church leaders: elders and deacons (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1-13). Beside these two ministries the Scriptures acknowledge no leader which continues in the church today (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:1-13). Elders are called: “bishops” (meaning “overseers”) because they are charged with the oversight of the assembly (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2); “pastors” because they shepherd the flock of God (Acts 20:28); and “rulers” because they govern and care for the church of God (I Tim. 3:4; Heb. 13:17, 24).

It is the duty of the church to seek and discover among its members those to whom Christ our Lord has imparted the necessary graces and gifts for this ministry (Acts 6:3), and after formally recognizing them by unified acceptance (Acts 6:5-6), to set them apart by united prayer (Acts 6:6), and then to submit to their authority (Lk. 10:16; John. 13:20; Heb. 13:17; I Pet. 5:5).

Section 2: General Prerequisites

1. All leaders of this church must be members of it.
2. Any individual set apart to one of these offices must be able conscientiously to affirm his agreement with the church's Confession of Faith and Constitution. If he should at any

time move from this position, he would be under spiritual and moral obligation immediately to make that fact known to the elders in an orderly manner.

3. While we acknowledge the valuable gifts which God has given women and the valuable assistance they may render to the leaders of the church (Rom. 16:1-6; Phil. 4:3; I Tim. 3:11), the Bible prohibits women from holding either the office of deacon or elder in the church (I Cor. 14:33b-35; I Tim. 2:8-15; 3:1-7). Women, therefore, shall not be nominated, elected, or ordained to either of these positions in the church. It is also contrary to Scripture for any woman to exercise headship or leadership in a formal meeting of the whole church either by leading in prayer, conducting the worship, reading the Scripture, leading the singing, administering the sacraments, or ministering the Word of God (I Cor. 14:33b-35; I Tim. 2:8-15). Since it is also a violation of the Scriptures for a woman to exercise authority over a man in spiritual things outside a meeting of the whole church, no woman shall be appointed to a teaching or authoritative function in a ministry of the church where adult men would be regularly under her ministry. Nevertheless, we acknowledge and encourage the valuable gifts and assistance of women: in the formal instruction of children and other women (Titus 2:3-5), in edifying conversation with women and men (I Cor. 11:5; Acts 18:26; Rom. 16:1-4; I Tim. 5:9-10) and in assisting the deacons with the diaconal and especially the benevolent ministries of the church.

Section 3: Elders

1. The Authority of the Eldership

A. The Ground of Their Authority: The Scriptures

The Head of the church (Col. 1:18), through His apostles (Eph. 2:20; I John. 4:6), has given to His church the Scriptures as an infallible and unchanging rule of practice (Matt. 20:28; I Cor. 7:17; Col. 4:16; II Thess. 2:15; 3:14; I Tim. 3:14-15), unto which all church leaders are always bound (I Cor. 14:36-38). Where the Scriptures give explicit or implicit direction to the church on a topic, this direction is never to be negated or contradicted. When no regulative word from Christ is given, church leaders are subject to the general principles of Scripture and to the light and order displayed in creation (I Cor. 11:13-14; 14:40).

B. The Limits of Their Authority

The Word of God defines the limits and boundaries of the authority of church officers and of the congregation.

The eldership as a body is authorized and responsible to give comprehensive oversight to the church (Acts 20:17-35; I Peter 5:1-2), including the preaching and teaching of the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:20-21,27; Titus 1:9); the watching out for the welfare of the soul of every member of the church (Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 1:28; I Thess. 2:11; Heb. 13:17); and the directing of the church in all its tasks by setting general policy and by making specific decisions (I Tim. 3:4-5; Heb. 13:17; I Peter 5:1-2). Nonetheless, the elders must exercise this authority with sensitivity to the consensus of the congregation (Ezek. 34:4; I Tim. 3:4-5; I Pet. 3:7) in the posture of servants and examples to the congregation (Matt. 20:25-28; I Pet. 5:3). Therefore, the elders should seek the advice and support of the congregation respecting any major endeavor or large expenditure and should be willing to yield to the congregation when appropriate (Acts 19:30; 21:11-14). Furthermore, the Lord has ordained that congregational approval or voting is mandatory in the recognition and confirmation of church officers (Acts 6:1f; 14:21-23) and the exercise of the most serious acts of church discipline, namely suspension and excommunication (I Cor. 5:4-5; II Thess. 3:14).

2. Plurality of Elders

A. The Scriptures clearly teach that there should be a plurality of elders in each local church (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5). Therefore, the church should endeavor to discover and then formally to recognize all the men whom the Holy Spirit has endowed with the requisite graces and gifts, but only such men.

B. Absence of a Plurality of Elders—This Constitution assumes, and the norms of biblical church order require, that a plurality of elders oversee this local church. (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5). Therefore, if there does not exist a plurality of elders in office; and this lack cannot in a timely way be supplied, the remaining elder (or the deacons, if there are no elders) shall seek the temporary oversight of the pastors of a trusted sister church holding as its

doctrinal standard the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689. The purposes of such an arrangement are to provide pastoral care and leadership in the recognition of the norm of a plurality of elders.

When an eldership meeting this requirement and willing to undertake these responsibilities is located, the church shall within a reasonable period of time officially place itself under this eldership. If the church has a remaining elder, this eldership shall function as his fellow elders. This action shall be taken by a written ballot at a properly called meeting of the church. A three-quarters majority of those present and voting is necessary for such an action. The recognition of the oversight of such an eldership shall be confirmed (or failing a three quarters majority withdrawn) in the same way at the annual meeting of the church in succeeding years. When a plurality of resident elders is raised up, the oversight arrangement here described, which is admittedly abnormal, shall immediately cease.

3. The Equality and Diversity of Elders

The elders are all equal in office and authority (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17), but diverse in gift and function. Each elder must be “able to teach” and be engaged in private instruction and admonition and in the administration and government of the church (Acts 20:28; I Tim. 5:17). However, some will be more experienced, involved, and proficient than others in executing various dimensions of the pastoral office, and in view of the God-given diversity of gifts, some should be more engaged in formal and public preaching and teaching than others (I Tim. 5:17). In view of this diversity of gifts as well as the numerous and grave responsibilities of the office, it is highly desirable that at least one elder should devote himself full-time to the work of the ministry and the oversight of the church as his calling in life. The church is responsible to give adequate financial support to elders who labor in the Word, while others of the elders fulfill the office as they maintain an ordinary vocation (Acts 18:3-5; I Cor. 9:9-11; I Tim 5:17-18).

4. The Number of Elders and Length of Term

Though a plurality of elders is the New Testament norm for every church, the New Testament does not specify the number of elders each church should have, nor does it dictate the length of an elder’s term of office. One truly called to this office is usually called to it for life. He is a gift of Christ to the church, and the gifts of God are without

repentance (Rom. 11:29). Only when an elder fails to meet the necessary qualifications for his office does he disqualify himself from being an elder.

5. The Qualification of Elders

Anyone considered for the office of an elder must evidence to God's people the personal, domestic, and ministerial qualifications that are set forth in the Scriptures (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Any man called to this office must be able conscientiously to affirm his agreement with our Confession of Faith and the Constitution of the church. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this fact known to the church.

6. The Appointment of Elders

A. General Statement. The appointment of Elders and Deacons is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. He has ordained, however, that each local church exercise the responsibility of recognizing those whom He is appointing to be Elders and Deacons in that particular church. Elders and Deacons are ordained, or appointed, to office by the laying on of hands by the Eldership (Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 4:14). This is an expression of approval for which the Elders are responsible (1 Tim. 5:22). Therefore, each officer must have the approval, not only of the church as a whole, but of the Eldership in particular. The Lord's appointment of an individual to either of these offices is recognized by means of that individual's possession of those graces and gifts required by Scripture for the particular office and his own conviction that the Lord is calling him to minister in that office (1 Tim. 3:1-7). The recognition of officers is a matter of such importance that it should never be pursued without much prayerful waiting upon God, an honest perusal of the relevant passages of Scripture, and a frank evaluation of those who are being considered. Each member of the church has a spiritual responsibility to be intelligently informed regarding these matters.

B. Procedure of Appointment. The recognition of those whom the Lord has appointed to bear office in this church is executed in three steps: nomination, election and, ordination.

1. Nomination. Nominations to either office are made by the Eldership.

At least once every year at the annual business meeting an advisory ballot shall be taken. On this ballot every voting member may write the name of any male member(s) and the office for which he believes that member to be qualified. Those men named by twenty-five percent or more of the members will then be considered by the Elders. If the Elders agree that the nominees are suitable, they will be notified and asked whether they will accept the nomination.

2. Election. Any church meeting for the election of officers shall be announced on four consecutive Lord's Days previous to its being held. The nominees shall be separately discussed and voted upon. During the discussion the nominee under consideration and members of his immediate family shall leave the presence of the assembly. The scriptural qualifications shall be read and expounded, and the nominee's qualifications openly discussed in the fear of God and with due respect for the reputation of the nominee. Concerning the vote, the church should seek unity of mind, but should such unity not be fully realized, no fewer than three-fourths of those ballots cast shall be required for election. This vote shall take place by written ballot subsequent to a full and free discussion oriented to the relevant scriptural passages.

3. Ordination. Following the election of an officer there shall be a portion of a regular worship service set aside at which time the officer shall be ordained by the laying on of the hands of the Eldership. This solemn act should always be accompanied by the special prayers of the whole church (Acts 13:1-3). The laying on of the Elders' hands shall signify their approval of an officer-elect.

4. Chairmanship. The Elders shall choose one from their number to serve as chairman of their meetings. The Deacons shall do the same.

Section 4: Deacons

1. Deacons are primarily responsible for assisting the elders in those practical aspects of ministry which would otherwise distract them from their priorities of the ministry of the Word, prayer and shepherding. Such practical matters include the administration of benevolence, the maintenance and improvement of the church's facilities, the

management of various business affairs and the facilitation of ministries within the church.

2. Deacons must fulfill the duties of their office in cooperation with, and in subjection to, the elders. The elders may at their discretion appoint one of the deacons to act as the chairman of the deacons in order to facilitate communication with the elders and the general organization of the diaconate.

3. The number of deacons shall not be fixed. The church shall set apart according to its need men who evidence the scriptural qualifications for that office (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:8-13).

4. No term of office shall be fixed for deacons. If a deacon fails to meet the necessary Scriptural qualifications for his office, he may be removed from office by the elders.

Section 5: Appointment of Officers

1. General Statement

The appointment of elders and deacons is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. However, He has ordained that they be formally recognized by the consent of the particular church they serve. Elders and deacons are ordained to office by the laying on of hands by the eldership (1 Tim. 4:14). This is an expression of approval for which the elders are responsible (1 Tim. 5:22). Therefore, each officer must have the approval, not only of the church as a whole, but of the eldership in particular. The Lord's appointment of an individual to either of these offices is recognized by means of that individual's possession of those graces and gifts required by Scripture for the particular office, and his own conviction that the Lord is calling him to minister in that office. The recognition of officers is a matter of such importance that it should never proceed without much prayerful waiting upon God, careful consideration of the relevant passages of Scripture and thorough evaluation of those persons being considered. Each member of the church has a responsibility to be intelligently informed regarding these matters.

2. Procedure of Appointment

The recognition of those whom the Lord has appointed to bear office in this church is carried out in three steps: nomination, election and ordination.

A. Nomination: The members of the church are encouraged to express to the elders (privately) their views concerning those whom Christ may be gifting for office in the church. The elders will seriously consider the wisdom God gives to His church. However, since it is the elder's responsibility to lead the church, nominations to office are to be made by the eldership. If at any time the church is without a pastor, a pulpit committee shall be elected by the church at any regular or specially called business meeting. The committee shall seek out a scripturally qualified man, and then nominate him to the church. The church shall then prayerfully consider him for the office of overseer. When possible, the church should look within its own membership to see if Christ is actually equipping someone for the office from within the church.

B. Election: Any church meeting for the election of officers shall be announced on two Lord's Days prior to its being held. The names of all nominees shall be separately discussed and voted upon. During the discussion the nominee under consideration and members of his immediate family shall leave the meeting until a written ballot is taken. The Scriptural qualifications shall be read and expounded, and the nominee's qualifications openly discussed in the fear of God and with due respect for the reputation of the nominee. The church should seek unanimity concerning each nominee, but where unanimity is not realized, three-fourths of those ballots cast shall be required for election.

C. Ordination: Following the election of an officer there shall be a portion of a worship service set aside at which time the officer-elect shall be ordained and installed into office by the laying on of the hands of the eldership. This solemn act should always be accompanied by the special prayers of the church (Acts 13:1-3). The laying on of the elders' hands shall signify their approval of an officer-elect.

Article 7: Church Government

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Biblical churches, and will seek, insofar as is practical and scriptural to maintain cooperation with other churches of Jesus Christ. A majority vote among members is usually all that is

needed to pass any motion being voted on by the body. However, we recognize that some matters of great importance necessitate a greater percentage of agreement within the congregation in order to preserve the unity of the church. Such instances are either noted elsewhere in this document or will be determined on a case by case basis by a majority vote of the entire body. We will seek by prayer and searching of the Scriptures to discern the will of God in our church votes, realizing that we are dealing with matters that concern the work of God and the glory of God in His church.

This church believes in and practices Elder rule by such Elders who have been duly elected and set apart by the church itself.

Article 8: Church Property

All property of this church is to be held for the use and benefit of those who are members thereof. This property is set apart to be used for the worship of God, the edification of His people, and any other use which is deemed necessary for the propagation of the gospel of Christ by this church and its leadership. Should any disagreements arise regarding the use of said property, such disputes shall be settled by majority vote of the members of this church. We believe that each and every local church of Christ is self-governing under the headship of Jesus Christ, and shall choose for itself what shall be done with its own property. We agree together to seek Divine wisdom in the usage of this property for the glory of God, the good of His church, and the promotion of His truth, according to the Holy Scriptures.

Article 9: Business Meetings

Section 1: The Semi-Annual Business Meeting

The first semi-annual business meeting of the church shall be held in January or February of each year. The second business meeting will be held in July or August of each year. The first meeting will consist of a financial report, with the proposed budget being presented and approved by a vote of the church. A pastor's report shall also be given by the elders at both business meetings.

Section 2: The Occasional Business Meetings

Additional church business meetings may be called by the Elders. They may also be

called by one fourth of the voting members, providing they make a written request for such a meeting. In the latter case, this request must state the reason for the meeting, be signed by one-fourth of the members in good standing and be presented to the Elders, who shall in turn make the proper announcement of the meeting, which shall be announced at regular services for at least two successive Lord's Days prior to the meeting. In cases that require urgent and/or immediate action, the Elders may at any time necessary call for an informational meeting or for vote of the church on any business that is urgent or time sensitive.

Section 3: Voting

All voting members should regard their presence at a duly called church meeting with the same seriousness and responsible attitude with which they would regard their attendance at any other meeting of the church. It shall be our goal to discern prayerfully the mind of God so that it may be said of us, as it was said of the church in Acts 6, that this "pleased the whole multitude." In situations where unanimity is not realized, except where the constitution requires a different proportionate vote, a simple majority of those voting will make a motion valid. The voting members present at any properly convened meeting of the church shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 4: Clerk

The elders shall appoint a clerk from among the members of the church. The responsibility of the clerk will be to record all the business transacted by the church, collect all documents submitted to the church at its meetings and provide for the church and its elders a careful record of the church's business. This record shall be available to the church and its elders. The elders shall have the authority to replace the clerk whenever it seems wise.

Article 10: Constitutional Authority

Section 1: Nature

This constitution, like all merely human documents, may be fallible. It simply reflects an earnest and sincere attempt to apply the Scriptures in ordering the life of this local church. Furthermore, we as members of this church have solemnly committed ourselves to follow this constitution in ordering the life of this church.

Section 2: Deficiencies

If at any time an elder or member of the church believes that adherence to this constitution would require a violation of the Word of God, he should make this known to the elders. If the elders conclude that Biblical principle requires an amendment of the constitution, they must communicate this matter in a timely way, submit relevant amendments to the church and seek by church vote to amend the constitution.

Section 3: Amendments

Amendments to this constitution must be adopted by three-fourths of those voting at any regular church meeting or a special meeting called for this purpose. Such proposed amendments shall be distributed in written form to the membership at least two (2) weeks prior to such a meeting.