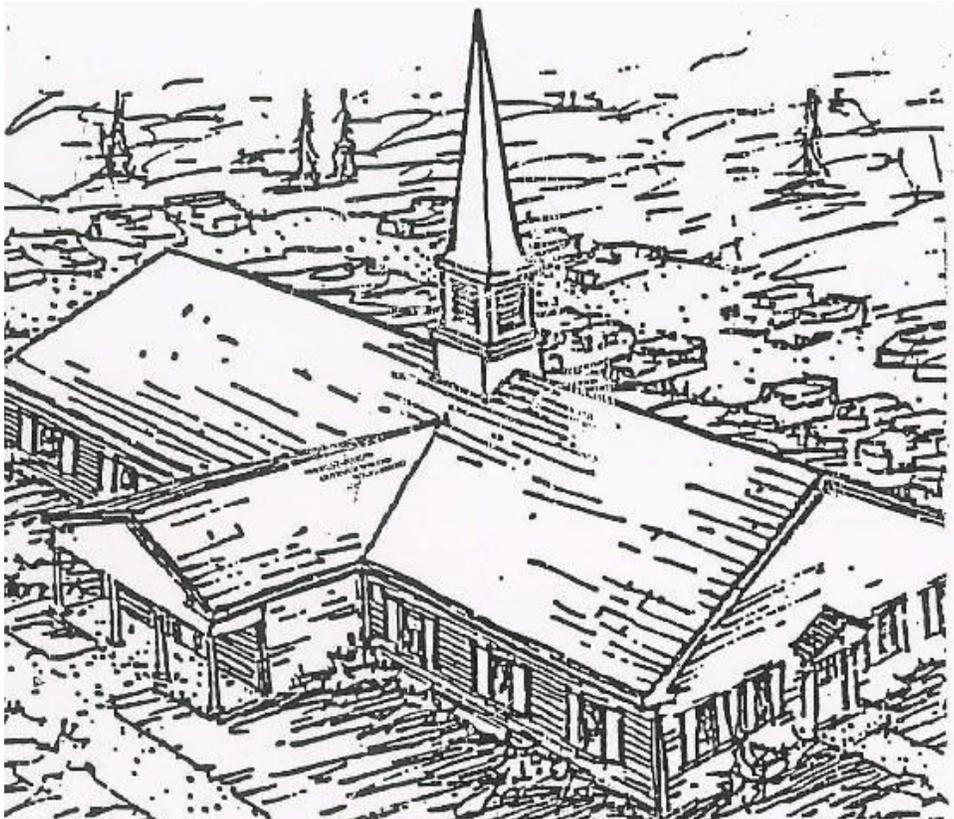


As Amended January 21, 2018

CONSTITUTION OF BETHANY BIBLE CHAPEL

Winchendon, Massachusetts



Ratified January 2, 1972

Last Amended January 21, 2018
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
BETHANY BIBLE CHAPEL
Winchendon, Massachusetts

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**CONSTITUTION
OF THE
BETHANY BIBLE CHAPEL**

Winchendon, Massachusetts

PREAMBLE

Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and voluntarily uniting together as a body of believers who accept the teaching and practices of the Baptists and the distinctives for which they have stood, band ourselves together for a more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the Word of God, in the adoption and establishment of this constitution for our government and plan of worship and service.

RATIFICATION

This constitution became effective at the organizational meeting upon a three - fourth majority vote of the proposed voting membership at the organizational meeting of the church. This meeting was held on January 4, 1972.

ARTICLE I

Name and Organization

- 1.1 Name. The name of this organization shall be "Bethany Bible Chapel".
- 1.2 Organization. The organizational meeting took place on January 4, 1972.
- 1.3 Incorporation. This organization was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a duly organized Baptist Church in April 1972.

ARTICLE II

Government

- 2.1 The government of the church is vested in the active membership.
- 2.2 Boards of the church government
 - 2.2.1 Board of Elders
 - 2.2.1.1 The Board of Elders shall be comprised of the Church Elders as defined in Article 6 Section 6.1.2
 - 2.2.1.2 In the case where there are no Elders as defined in Article 7 Section 7.1.1.1, the Elder Board shall be comprised of the Board of Deacons

2.2.2 Board of Deacons

2.2.2.1 The Board of Deacons shall be comprised of the Church Deacons, as defined in Article 6 Section 6.1.3

2.2.3 Emergency Leadership Board

2.2.3.1 The Emergency Leadership Board shall be comprised of the combination of the Board of Elders and Board of Deacons.

2.2.3.2 The individual members of the Emergency Leadership Board shall vote as individual members; all votes being of equal weight.

2.2.3.3 The Emergency Leadership Board shall be active only in the event that the number of individual Elders is fewer than three.

2.2.3.4 The Emergency Leadership Board shall deactivate when a third Elder is appointed.

2.2.4 The Board of Directors

2.2.4.1 The Board of Directors shall be comprised of the Board of Elders, so long as the number of Elders is greater than or equal to three.

2.2.4.2 In the event that the number of Elders is fewer than three the Board of Directors shall be the Emergency Leadership Board.

2.2 The fiscal year of the church shall be from January 1st to December 31st, inclusive.

ARTICLE III

Commission

3.1 The purpose of this church shall be:

3.1.1 Mission Statement: Our mission at Bethany Bible Chapel is to glorify God through worship, nurture and outreach, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

3.1.2 To obey Christ's great commission, to make disciples by providing a five-fold ministry of preaching the Gospel, every member evangelism, teaching the Bible, worship and fellowship.

3.1.3 To observe the administration of the ordinances of the New Testament, the spiritual care and improvement of the members and the evangelization of the world through the support of our missionaries.

ARTICLE IV

Affiliations

4.1 District. This church shall be affiliated with the Converge Northeast.

4.2 National. This church shall be affiliated with the Converge Worldwide.

- 4.3 Relationship. This church shall be subject to no ecclesiastical body, but recognizes and sustains the responsibility of mutual counsel, cooperation and support of the fellowship of Conference churches.

ARTICLE V

Statement of Faith

- 5.1 This church's articles of faith are as follows:
- 5.1.1 The Word of God. We believe that the Bible is the word of God (2 Timothy 3: 15-17), fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts (Psalm 19: 7-8), written by men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1: 20-21), and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct (John 17: 17)
 - 5.1.2 The Trinity. We believe that there is one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6: 4) eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption (Matthew 28: 19).
 - 5.1.3 God the Father. We believe in God, the Father, Creator of Heaven and earth (Genesis 1: 1-2). We believe He is an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness (Isaiah 6: 3), wisdom, power and love (Romans 11: 33). We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men (Isaiah 57: 15), that He hears and answers prayer (Psalm 3: 4), and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1: 4-14).
 - 5.1.4 Jesus Christ. We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son (John 3: 16), conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1: 20). We believe in His virgin birth (Matthew 1: 23), sinless life (Hebrews 4: 15); miracles and teachings (Gospels). We believe in His propitiatory death (Romans 3: 25), bodily resurrection (John 20: 27-28), ascension into Heaven (Acts 1: 9), perpetual intercession for His people (Hebrews 2: 17) and personal, visible return to earth (Revelation 22: 20).
 - 5.1.5 The Holy Spirit. We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son (John 14: 26) to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment and to regenerate, sanctify and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ (John 16:1-15). We believe that the Holy Spirit in-dwells in every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide (2 Thessalonians 2: 13).
 - 5.1.6 Regeneration. We believe that all men are sinners by nature (Ephesians 2: 3) and by choice (Romans 1: 24) and are, therefore, under condemnation (Romans 1: 18). We believe that those who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior (I Corinthians 12: 3).

- 5.1.7 The Church. We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body, of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members (Colossians 1: 18). We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ (Philippians 2: 1-11), baptized on a credible profession of faith (Matthew 28: 18-20), and associated for worship, work and fellowship (Acts 2: 42-47). We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world (Habakkuk 2: 14).
- 5.1.8 Christian Conduct. We believe that a Christian should live first for the glory of God (I Corinthians 10: 31) and then for the well-being of his fellowmen (James 2: 14-20); that his conduct should be blameless before the world (Colossians 4: 5); that his marriage shall be between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:23-25); that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions (Colossians 3: 17); and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ (Philippians 3: 12-21).
- 5.1.9 The Ordinances. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to believers in the local church. They are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism symbolizes repentance, spiritual cleansing and one's identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6: 3-5). This is enacted by the immersion in water of a believer in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death (I Corinthians 11: 23-26). We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 5.1.10 Religious Liberty. We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority (Romans 14: 4); that, therefore, Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other (Luke 20: 25).
- 5.1.11 Church Cooperation. We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization (I Corinthians 1: 10). Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may like-wise cooperate with inter-denominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis (I Corinthians 12: 12-13).
- 5.1.12 The Last Things. We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom (Revelation 20: 1- 15). We believe in the resurrection of the body (Romans 8: 18-20), the final judgment (Matthew 25: 31-46), the eternal happiness of the righteous (Revelation 21: 1-4), and the endless suffering of the wicked (Mark 9: 48).

ARTICLE VI

Offices

6.1 Qualifications, Duties & Terms of Offices

6.1.1 General Qualifications for Office

Member of the Church

6.1.1.1 At least 21 years of age

6.1.1.2 Active for one year

6.1.2 Elders

6.1.2.1 Introduction

a. The church shall be served in spiritual leadership by a Board of Elders, consisting of a pastor and duly confirmed men from the congregation.

6.1.2.2 Qualifications

a. They shall meet the Scriptural requirements set forth in I Timothy 3: 1 -7 and Titus 1: 6-9.

b. They must have served well in either an elected or appointed position.

6.1.2.3 Duties

a. A Covenant responsibility to meet together frequently for prayer, study and administration. This responsibility shall also include meeting regularly with the Deacons for prayer and administration.

b. A Covenant responsibility to administer the Word through:

- corporate worship (incl. music)
- teaching
- ordinances

c. A Covenant responsibility to shepherd His people through:

- encouragement
- visitation
- discipline

d. A Covenant responsibility to evangelize to the world.

e. A Covenant responsibility to administer His Church through:

- setting times of business meetings
- appointing a nominating committee of five members, two of whom shall be elders, to be confirmed by the congregation at the annual business meeting
- submitting an annual written report (for distribution at annual meeting) detailing the events of the past year, the present status of the church and the future goals of the church
- appoint Church Clerk

f. A Covenant responsibility to hold themselves accountable to God through annual peer review.

6.1.2.4 Terms

- a. Elders, with the exception of the pastor, shall be appointed to a four (4) year term but will be terminated if one of the following occurs:
 - by voluntary resignation
 - by a vote of a majority of the Elders
 - by a vote of the congregation as described in 6.1.2.4 b
- b. Elders, including the Pastor, are accountable to the congregation in the following manner (Matthew 18: 15-18):
 - If a member has a grievance against an elder, the member shall approach the elder for the purpose of resolving the problem
 - If the problem remains unresolved, the member shall meet with the Elder with a witness for the purpose of resolving the problem
 - If the problem remains unresolved the member and witness shall meet with the Board of Elders, with the purpose of resolving the problem
 - If after that meeting the problem still remains unresolved a written petition of 20% of the total eligible membership, requesting removal of the Elder, shall be submitted to the Board of Elders
 - Within two weeks after receipt of the petition the Elders shall schedule a special business meeting, which will have as its only agenda item the question of termination of duties for the elected Elder
 - A simple majority shall carry any motion for termination of the Elder's title, duties and responsibilities

6.1.2.5 Pastor

- a. The Pastor shall be an Elder and meet all the qualifications of an Elder.
- b. The Pastor shall be a baptist minister cooperating with the Converge Worldwide.
- c. The Pastor shall perform all of the scriptural duties of his office under the guidance of the Holy Spirit through:
 - preaching / teaching of the Word of God
 - administering the ordinances
 - leading in the shepherding of the church
 - leading the church in the fulfillment of God's purpose
- d. The Pastor shall have the responsibility of directing the administrative secretary.
- e. The Pastor shall be the lead Elder

- f. In the absence of the Pastor the pastoral duties shall be executed by the Board of Elders and / or an interim pastor appointed by the Elders and confirmed by the congregation

6.1.3 Deacons

6.1.3.1 Introduction

- a. The church shall be served in spiritual stewardship by Deacons, consisting of duly confirmed men

6.1.3.2 Qualifications

- a. They shall meet the Scriptural requirements set forth in I Timothy 3: 8- 12 and Acts 6: 2-3

6.1.3.3 Duties

- a. They shall fulfill their duties, as led by the Holy Spirit, defined by their appointed ministries as follows:

- Lead Deacon of Building & Property

- Building upkeep, repairs & cleaning
- Property landscaping and snow removal

- Lead Deacon of Finance

- Oversee Financial Committee, consisting of the Deacon, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary. The committee shall develop the annual budget and monitor offerings received and line item spending. The committee shall meet regularly at the discretion of the Deacon.
- Church shall bond the Deacon of Finance.

- Lead Deacon of Supportive Ministries

- Deaconesses
- Nursery
- Church Sound System
- Ushering
- Worship Greeters
- Food Pantry
- Hospitality

- b. In consultation with the Elders, Deacons may assign appointees, not elected by the church, to direct and assist the various ministries under their leadership. Deacons may choose to lead one or more of these ministries themselves. Appointments shall be announced at the next business meeting of the church.
- c. Each Deacon shall meet regularly with the leaders of ministries under their direction, at the discretion of the Deacon. The Deacons

shall also meet regularly with the Board of Elders for prayer, administration, and mutual accountability.

- d. Each Deacon shall submit a written report of the past year's actions, present status and next year's goals for the ministries under their care at annual meeting.
- e. Additional Deacons may be nominated as needed and recommended by the Elders to be elected or confirmed at the Annual Meeting or any regular business meeting. These Deacons to be assigned to any of the Lead Deacons as deemed appropriate to meet the various stewardship needs as they arise or diminish.
- f. The Elders may appoint from the Lead Deacons a Chairman of the Deacon Board to lead the Deacon Board meetings, to administrate, to oversee the respective stewardship functions and to help facilitate the execution of all duties within these stewardship ministries.

6.1.3.4 Terms

- a. The Deacons shall serve two year terms but will be terminated if one of the following occurs:
 - by voluntary resignation
 - by a vote of a majority of the Elder Board
 - By a vote of the congregation after church discipline as described for Elders in 6.1.2.4b

6.1.4 Church Moderator

6.1.4.1 Qualifications

- a. He shall meet the Scriptural requirements for a Deacon as set forth in I Timothy 3: 8-12 and Acts 6: 2-3

6.1.4.2 Duties

- a. He shall officiate all church business meetings.
- b. He shall be responsible for notifying the membership in regards to upcoming meetings
- c. He shall oversee the preliminary affairs of all meetings
- d. He shall attend all Elder/ Deacon Meetings

6.1.4.3 Terms

- a. He shall serve a one year elected term

6.1.5 Treasurer

6.1.5.1 Qualifications

- a. Prior demonstration of financial ability
- b. Prior demonstration of faithfulness in ministry

6.1.5.2 Duties

- a. Serve with the Deacon of Finance, the Assistant Treasurer and the Financial Secretary on the Finance Committee
 - b. Record all receipts and disbursements.
 - c. Pay by check all authorized bills.
 - d. Maintain all church legal and financial records
 - e. Audit a monthly budget expenditure update for each budgeted area which will include: amount budgeted, amount expended to date, percentage of budget spent and balance remaining.
 - f. Monthly report of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be submitted to the Finance Committee.
- 6.1.5.3 Terms
- a. Shall serve a one year elected term
- 6.1.5.4 Church Obligation
- a. The church shall bond the Church Treasurer
- 6.1.6 Financial Secretary
- 6.1.6.1 Qualifications
- a. Prior demonstration of financial ability
 - b. Prior demonstration of faithfulness in ministry
- 6.1.6.2 Duties
- a. Serve with the Deacon of Finance, Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer on the Finance Committee
 - b. Count all offerings of the church
 - c. Keep a weekly receipt of offerings endorsed with the signatures of the counters. (There should always be at least two counters.)
 - d. Deposit church funds in the designated bank in the name of the church
 - e. Keep a record of all individual contributions and provide each giver with a receipt of the previous year's giving by January 31st
 - f. Provide an annual financial report (for distribution at annual meeting)
 - g. Prepare reports requested by the Finance Committee
- 6.1.6.3 Terms
- a. Shall serve a one year elected term
- 6.1.6.4 Church Obligation
- a. The Church shall bond the Church Financial Secretary.
- 6.1.7 Assistant Treasurer
- 6.1.7.1 Qualifications
- a. Prior demonstration of financial ability
 - b. Prior demonstration of faithfulness in ministry

6.1.7.2 Duties

- a. Serve with the Deacon of Finance, the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary on the Finance Committee
- b. Countersign all checks paid out by the Treasurer.
- c. Maintain all church legal and financial records.
- d. Prepare a monthly budget/ expenditure update for each budgeted area which will include: amount budgeted, amount expended to date, percentage of budget spent and balance remaining.
- e. Prepare written reports for quarterly and annual church business meetings and finance committee meetings.
- f. Monthly report of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be submitted to the Finance Committee.

6.1.7.3 Terms

- a. Shall serve a one year elected term

6.1.7.4 Church Responsibility

- a. The church shall bond the Assistant Treasurer

6.1.8 Youth Worker Oversight Committee

6.1.8.1 Formation

- a. The committee will consist of no less than five and no more than seven members.
- b. The Deacon of Nurture will serve as an ex-officio member

6.1.8.2 Qualifications

- a. Prior experience in youth ministries.
- b. Completion of BBC Youth Worker application and training.

6.1.8.3 Duties

- a. Serve with the Deacon of Nurture.
- b. Administer all practices and procedures of the Bethany Bible Chapel Youth Worker Policy.
- c. Perform subsequent training sessions with active Youth Workers every Year.
- d. Identify violations of the Youth Worker Policy and notify the Elders and Deacons of any situation immediately.

6.1.8.4 Terms

- a. Shall serve rotating two year elected terms.

6.1.9 Deaconess

6.1.9.1 Formation

- a. The deaconess board shall consist of at least 3 and no more than 7 members.
- b. The deaconess shall serve as a ministry of the Deacon of Supportive Ministries.
- c. The deaconesses shall elect from among themselves a chairwoman who will serve until the end of her term, and may be reelected.

6.1.9.2 Qualifications

- a. They shall meet the scriptural requirements as set forth in Titus 2:3-5.

6.1.9.3 Duties

- a. Their duties shall be to support worship, and the celebration of the ordinances in areas such as:
 - Preparation of the elements for Communion.
 - Assisting baptismal candidates, especially women, in preparation for that event.
 - Administering any charitable food ministries of the chapel.
 - Administering any hospitality ministries of the chapel.

6.1.9.4 Terms

- a. Deaconess shall be appointed to a 2 year term by the Elder Board and affirmed by the congregation at a regular business meeting, and their service may be terminated if one of the following occurs:
 - By voluntary resignation
 - By a majority vote of the Elder Board
 - By a vote of the congregation after church discipline as described for Elders in 6.1.2.4b

ARTICLE VII

Elections

7.1 Elders

7.1.1 Appointment

- 7.1.1.1 All Elders shall be appointed to the church by the Board of Elders. Candidates may be recommended to the Elders by any member of the church. Appointees should be considered in accordance with Article

6.1.2 with the goal of having no less than three elders. Additional Elders should be considered, as qualified individuals are available.

7.1.2 Congregational Confirmation of new Elder

7.1.2.1 Congregational confirmation of a new Elder (excluding Pastor) can be an order of business at any annual, quarterly or special business meeting. An 80% majority vote of the quorum is required for confirmation. Voting shall be by written ballot.

7.1.3 Pastor

7.1.3.1 Upon a vacancy in the office of pastor, a pulpit committee of seven church members, two of whom shall be Elders (if there are at least two Elders in office) shall be nominated by the Elder Board and ratified by the church. To the best extent possible this committee shall be as representative as possible, its members being chosen from families, singles, youth and elders. It shall be the duty of this committee to take necessary steps to secure a pastor. In seeking a suitable candidate, the committee shall consult the leaders of our Conference and request suggestions from the church members. They shall search for candidates who are available and whose doctrinal position is in keeping with the Statement of Faith and the spiritual practice of this church. They shall consider the spiritual, educational, personal and theological qualifications to serve the needs of this pastorate. One candidate shall be presented to the church, following unanimous committee agreement, at a church business meeting, announcement of which shall be given in accordance with Article 8.2.4.1. Votes shall be by written ballot, with an eighty (80) percent majority vote of the quorum necessary to extend the call to the pastor-elect. The terms of the call shall be submitted in writing to the candidate and a copy retained by the church.

7.1.3.2 Terms of the Call

- a. The call shall be for an indefinite period of time
- b. The terms as determined by the, Board of Directors and confirmed by the body, shall include:
 - Job Description
 - Salary
 - Housing Arrangements
 - Vacation
 - Benefits

7.1.3.3 Dissolution of Relationship

- a. By the Pastor
 - The terms of this office may be ended upon a notice in writing on the part of the pastor. The expiration of the notice shall be at least thirty (30) days or at the discretion of the Board of Elders. The pastor shall give his notice of resignation to the Elders before it is presented to the church at a special business meeting, announcement of which shall be consistent with Article 8.2.4.1.

b. By the Church

- Where an unresolved grievance exists against the pastor (and all appropriate prior steps as defined in Article 6.1.2.4.b have been taken), all action to dismiss the pastor shall be referred to the Elders for consideration before it is brought to the church.
- A written request signed by at least 20% of the active membership shall cause the Elders to call a special business meeting for church action, notice of which shall be consistent with Article 8.2.4.1. A simple majority vote shall be necessary to carry any motion for dismissal. Following the vote the Elders shall seek to reassess their spiritual leadership and reconcile the body through spiritual healing.

7.2 Deacons, Moderator, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer , Financial Secretary and Nominating Committee

7.2.1 Congregational election of Deacons, Moderator, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be an order of business at every Annual Business Meeting. Voting by the members shall be by written ballot. A simple majority of the member's present voting affirmative shall be considered as confirmation for each officer.

7.2.2 Congregational confirmation of the Nominating Committee shall be an order of business at every Annual Business Meeting.

7.3 Assumption of Duties

7.3.1 New officers shall assume their responsibilities following the closure of the Annual Business Meeting.

7.4 Termination

7.4.1 Resignation from any position shall be in writing to the Elders and will be effective on the date specified.

ARTICLE VIII

Church Meetings

8.1 Worship Meetings

8.1.1 The regular meetings of this church for worship shall be held Sunday mornings. Other regular meetings shall be recommended by the Board of Elders and approved by the church.

8.1.2 The Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of each month or at such times as the Board of Elders shall advise.

8.2 Business Meetings

8.2.1 The annual business meeting of the church shall be held as near to January 1st as possible. This date is to be set at the October Quarterly Business Meeting.

8.2.2 Additional Quarterly Business Meetings shall be held in April, July and October, date and time to be determined by the Elders.

8.2.3 Special Business Meetings, for items of major business, may be held at any time by order of the Board of Directors or upon written request of the membership, in accordance with Article 8.2.4.1.

8.2.4 Notification of Business Meetings

8.2.4.1 The church membership shall be notified in advance of all annual, quarterly and special Business Meetings. Notifications can be made either seven days in advance by mailing or announced two Sundays in advance for any Business Meetings.

8.2.4.2 Ordinary business can be conducted at any worship or business meeting of the church by approval of the Board of Directors

8.2.5 Quorum

8.2.5.1 Ordinary Business

a. No quorum required

8.2.5.2 Major Business

a. The quorum shall be determined from active members who are locally resident and able to vote.

b. The quorum shall be 33%. Matters considered as major business are as follows:

- The call or dismissal of a Pastor
- The confirmation of a pastoral search committee
- The election or dismissal of any church officer
- Annual Church budget
- The confirmation of new Elders
- Cases of Church discipline as recommended by the Elders
- The purchase or sale of church property
- Amendments to this constitution
- Expenditures of more than \$500.00, not already in the budget excluding emergency expenditures
- Emergency expenditures as determined by the Elders and the Deacons that exceed \$2,000.00; membership to be notified within 15 days of any such expenditures

8.2.5.3 Voting

- a. A simple majority vote is required for all items, unless otherwise noted.

8.2.6 Voting Qualifications

- 8.2.6.1 All Matters pertaining to the purchase, sale or mortgaging of property shall be voted on only by members in good standing who are 18 years of age or older. On all other matters members in good standing who are 16 years of age or older are entitled to vote.

ARTICLE IX

Membership

9.1 Admission of Members

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, and holding views for faith and practice in conformity with those of this church, may become a member upon recommendation of the Elders and personal testimony before the church (this personal testimony may be delivered in writing and read by someone other than the candidate, if the Elders think it prudent given the circumstances) subject to a majority vote of the church members. Testimonies may be given at any worship or business meeting of the church. Members may question candidates prior to voting. Announcement and notice of proposed candidates for membership shall be given to the congregation at least two weeks before a vote for membership is held. (Membership becomes official when the baptismal and admission qualifications have been met.) Members will be welcomed into the fellowship at a Sunday worship meeting. Qualifications for consideration may be met in any of the following ways:

9.1.1.1 By Baptism

- a. Following profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and evidence of regeneration, any person may, upon baptism by immersion, be received into the membership.

9.1.1.2 By Letter

- a. Members of other churches of like faith and practice may be received by virtue of a letter of transfer, certifying their baptism by immersion, duly granted by said church.

9.1.1.3 By Experience

- a. Persons unable to provide a letter but who give satisfactory evidence of their profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as

Savior, and who have been previously immersed, may be received into membership upon testimony of their experience.

9.1.1.4 By Restoration

- a. A former member of the Chapel, whose membership has lapsed, may be restored to fellowship on profession of faith and evidence of that renewed faith. Any person placed on the inactive roll or dismissed from membership of this church may, upon recommendation of the Elders, be restored by vote of the church members.

9.2 Duties of the Members

- 9.2.1 To live in faithful accordance with their profession of faith.
- 9.2.2 To keep the covenant obligations as summarized by the statement of faith.
- 9.2.3 To honor and esteem their Elders, praying for them regularly, and assisting them in carrying out the program of the church.
- 9.2.4 To contribute regularly and proportionately toward the ministry of the church, with such resources as God has blessed them.
- 9.2.5 To preserve the unity of the church and, if ever opposed to the statement of faith, to quietly withdraw from the membership rather than disrupt the fellowship.
- 9.2.6 To regularly attend church worship and business meetings and use spiritual gifts and talents in a consistent ministry for the up building of the church.
- 9.2.7 To extend the church's witness throughout the community by a regular evangelistic ministry, Christian love, and exemplary conduct.
- 9.2.8 To evangelize the world through support of missions
- 9.2.9 To remember to support and strengthen one another regularly in the faith through mutual exhortation.

9.3 Status of Members

- 9.3.1 Active members are members who have not been dismissed, transferred, or placed on the inactive list.
- 9.3.2 Non-resident members are active members temporarily living too far away (college students, job situation) to attend regularly but who maintain contact with the church. This is not to diminish the church covenant to unite with a like church upon relocation.

9.3.3 Inactive members are those who have been absent from church services for a period of three months without valid reason. They shall be placed on the inactive list by recommendation of the Elders only after the Elders have made a reasonable attempt to restore them to fellowship. They shall be duly informed that such action will be taken by vote of the church.

9.4 Discipline of Members

9.4.1 A Member in sin. The church shall seek to follow the pattern of Matthew 18: 15-18, in that all members shall be responsible Christians, confronting fellow Christians who are living in sin. This is to be done in love with the motive of restoration to fellowship with God. The Christian who knows about this sin must not tell another until he has personally confronted the offender. If the sinning Christian refuses to repent after confrontation, the confronting Christian must take one or two other Christians to appeal to the offender again. If the sinning Christian again refuses to repent, those who confronted him must report the sin to the Elders as a matter for consideration and possible church discipline.

9.4.2 The Board of Elders shall handle cases of discipline. They shall seek to interview all members violating their Christian obligations or conducting themselves in such manner as to bring reproach upon Christ and shall endeavor to restore them to the fellowship. Failing to receive satisfactory evidence of repentance and reformation, they shall bring a recommendation to the church for dismissal.

9.5 Dismissal of Members

9.5.1 Active members may be granted letters of transfer for the purpose of uniting with another baptistic, evangelical church, by vote of the church. Letters of transfer shall be sent directly to the church with which the member wishes to unite.

9.5.2 Active members may be granted letters of commendation for the purpose of uniting with a non-baptistic, evangelical church, by vote of the church.

9.5.3 Members may be granted letters of dismissal for the purpose of uniting with a non-evangelical church, by vote of the church.

9.5.4 Inactive Members may be granted letters of dismissal for the purpose of uniting with any other church, by vote of the church.

9.5.5 Members may be issued letters of dismissal as a consequence of church discipline in keeping with the requirements of section 9.4. Dismissal shall require a three-fourths majority vote of the votes cast, ignoring blank votes.

9.5.6 Members who have been inactive for greater than one year may be disciplined by dismissal from membership by recommendation of the Elders and a three-fourths majority vote of the votes cast, ignoring blank votes. The Elders shall make a

reasonable attempt to restore them to fellowship and inform them of the vote to be taken.

9.5.7 Members shall be removed from membership by request, or by death.

ARTICLE X

Other Employees

- 10.1 Pastoral associates may be called at any church business meeting upon recommendation of the Board of Elders.
- 10.2 Any salaried employee may be called following an affirmative vote of the qualified voters of the church. All salaried personnel shall be under the general direction of the Pastor.
- 10.3 Salaries and vacations shall be arranged by the Elders at the time of employment and shall be confirmed upon recommendation of the Finance Committee and an affirmative vote of the church.
- 10.4 All salaried personnel shall be given a written description of duties for the position held. Written reports of the past year's actions, present status and next year's goals shall be given to the church at annual meeting.

ARTICLE XI

Finances

- 11.1 The financial support of the church shall be received through the voluntary giving of offerings.

ARTICLE XII

Church Sponsored Organizations

- 12.1 No church sponsored organization shall be formed before the sponsors have received approval of their plans from the Board of Elders.
 - 12.1.1 The organizations shall confer with the Board of Elders regarding their plans and activities for approval.
 - 12.1.2 Should special fund raising be deemed necessary, prior approval must be granted by vote of the Board of Elders.
- 12.2 The chairman of any church sponsored organization shall be an active member of the church.
- 12.3 An annual report of all activities and finances shall be submitted to the Board of Elders at their last regular meeting in December.

- 12.4 A financial report of any special fund raising activity sponsored by the Board of Elders must be given to the Finance Committee within seven days following the activity.

ARTICLE XIII

Disposition of Church Property

13.1 Division

- 13.1.1 In case of organic division of the church membership, the church property shall belong to those members who abide by this constitution.

13.2 Dissolution

- 13.2.1 Should conditions arise where, for any reason, the church shall cease to function, the church's property shall be disposed of by its remaining members in consultation with the Northeast Baptist Convention.

13.3 Consolidation

- 13.3.1 Should conditions arise where a merger with another church be advisable, the Board of Elders shall be authorized to negotiate the terms and report to the church. The church must vote approval before such a merger is consummated.

ARTICLE XIV

Amendments

- 14.1 Amendments to this constitution may be introduced through a formal motion at any Annual or Quarterly Business Meeting but shall not be acted on until the following business meeting. At that scheduled meeting an affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the members present at the meeting shall be required for acceptance; provided, however, that in the mean-time members have been duly informed of the proposed amendment.
- 14.2 This constitution shall contain a log of accepted amendments, to include date amended, article amended, and a brief summary statement. This log shall be maintained as an addendum to the constitution.

ARTICLE XV

Rules of Order

- 15.1 The rules contained in Robert's Rules Of Order shall govern the business proceedings of this church in all cases where they are not inconsistent with this constitution.

ARTICLE XVI

Suspension of Constitutional Articles and Sections

- 16.1 Should a situation develop wherein it is not feasible, or advisable or possible to carry out a given article or component thereof, then and only upon the recommendation of the Board of Elders, a major business meeting shall be convened to seek church approval for a temporary suspension of said adverse articles or component thereof, and providing all of the
- 16.2 necessary conditions are met as follows:
 - 16.2.1 Approval for said suspension shall require a three-fourths majority vote of a major business quorum of the membership.
 - 16.2.2 The suspension must be specific as to time, and shall not exceed one year unless approved by like action.
 - 16.2.3 The suspension must be specific as to scope. The suspension of one article or component thereof shall not be construed to be a suspension of an entire article or other articles unless so expressed.
 - 16.2.4 Articles V and IX shall not be subject to suspension, nor shall any suspension be put forth that in any way violates the "spirit" (lofty ideals and highest aspirational intent) espoused by Articles V and IX.

ADDENDUM

History of Accepted Constitutional Amendments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Summary Statement</u>	<u>Article</u>
1/30/98	A major amendment/revision to the constitution was approved. Significant changes were made throughout the document.	
10/25/98	Add Assistant Treasurer as elected church officer; distribute Treasurer’s responsibilities between Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.	VI, VII

<u>Date</u>	<u>Summary Statement</u>	<u>Article</u>
10/13/00	Changes: Add “may be disciplined by dismissal from membership” and to the three-fourths majority vote, add “three-fourths of votes cast, ignoring blank votes”.	IX
4/16/04	Add: Church Obligation a. The Church shall bond the Financial Secretary.	VI 6.1.6.4

7/8/05	VI 6.1.5.2 VI 6.1.7.2	<p>Add to Treasurer Duties: * Record all receipts and disbursements * Pay by check all authorized bills</p> <p>Add to Assistant Treasurer Duties: * Countersign all checks paid out by the Treasurer * Maintain all church legal and financial records</p>
1/13/06	V 5.1.8	<p>Christian Conduct: <u>Add</u> <i>‘that his marriage shall be between one man and one woman (Genesis 2: 23 –25);’</i> <u>between:</u> “ . . . that his conduct shall be blameless before the world (Colossians 4: 5); <u>and</u> . . . that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions (Colossians 3:17);”</p>
7/14/06	VI 6.1.8.	<p>Offices: <u>Add</u> after 6.1.7.4 Youth Worker Oversight Committee a. Formation b. Qualifications c. Duties d. Terms</p>
10/08/09	VIII 8.2.5.2	<p>Church Meetings Major Business b. <u>Add</u> “excluding emergency expenditures” <u>Add</u> “Emergency expenditures as determined by the Elders and the Deacon of Property and Finance that exceed \$2,000.00; membership to be notified within 15 days of any such expenditures</p>

<u>Date</u>		<u>Article</u>
		<u>Summary Statement</u>
7/9/2010	VIII 8.2.2	<p>Church Meetings Additional Quarterly Business Meetings shall be held in April, July and October, date and time to be determined by the Elders.</p>
1/13/2011	VI	Offices

- 6.1.3.3 The Deacon of Building, Property & Finance position was split into two separate Deacon ministries. One Deacon of Building & Property, and one Deacon of Finance.
- 1/15/2012 Amendments/revisions to the constitution were approved, Boards of the church government and creation of Deaconess. Changes were made throughout the document.
- 4/23/17 IX Revisions for admission of members in the constitution were approved.
9.1
- 1/21/18 VI Deleted Deacon of Nurture and Deacon of Outreach section.
6.1.3.3a
- VI Added Lead before Deacon of Building and Property, Deacon of Finance and Deacon of Supportive Ministries.
6.1.3.3
- VI Added a section ‘e’ allowing additional Deacons to be nominated.
6.1.3.3
- VI Added a section ‘f’ allowing Elders to appoint a Lead Deacon to be the Chairman of the Deacon Board.
6.1.3.3
- XIV “At no time can any amendment be adopted that would be contrary to historic Baptist beliefs and practice.” has been removed. 14.1