Constitution and By-Laws

of

Berea Baptist Church

4408 Evans to Locks Rd.
Evans, GA 30809

CONSTITUTION

Article 1. Name

This church will be known as Berea Baptist Church, established March 31, 1991.

Article 2. Affiliations

Berea Baptist Church is voluntarily affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Georgia Baptist Convention, and the Kilpatrick Baptist Association.

Article 3. Mission

Our mission is to glorify God by enjoying, living, and proclaiming the Gospel.

Our mission is realized when we are committed to Christ, maturing in Christ, communing through Christ, and bearing witness for Christ. These four indicators are the evidence that we are fulfilling our mission.

- *Commitment:* God has saved us by His grace alone and calls us to be joyfully committed to our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Commitment to Christ should be evidenced by commitment to His church.
- *Maturity:* We are not only saved by God's grace, but we also are transformed by its power. We desire for the Gospel to increasingly inform the way that we relate to God and to others.

- *Community:* The Lord saves sinners and calls us to live together as part of His redemptive family, the church. We experience Christ's love as we share together the joys and hardships of life.
- *Witness:* Christ calls us to proclaim His Gospel to all nations of the earth. We desire to faithfully share His Good News with those near to us and around the world.

Article 4. Core Values

Our core values are the specific guiding principles of our church. These are practical applications of our stated mission. Our core values flesh out our mission and indicate the ways in which we will seek to fulfill that mission.

1. God's Glory
We value the joy of knowing and experiencing God's glory in all of life.

2. Scripture
We value the Scriptures as our only source for the knowledge and application of sound doctrine.

3. Preaching
We value the faithful and relevant exposition of God's Word.

4. Conversion
We value a right understanding of God's life-transforming work of conversion.

5. Family
We value the primary role of the family for Christian education, training, and nurture.

6. Church Membership
We value meaningful membership, reflected by a living commitment to corporate worship, giving, prayer and service.

7. Church Leadership
We value the spiritual leadership of elders, and the servant care of deacons.

8. Community
We value the community of believers for mutual edification as we share the joys and hardships of life.

9. Prayer
We value humble and confident individual and corporate prayer.

10. Ministering Members
We value the calling and gifting of each individual member to cheerfully participate in the work of the ministry.

11. Evangelism
We value biblically responsible evangelism that invites sinners to repent of sin and trust in Christ.

12. World Missions
We value the urgent declaration of God's salvation in Christ to all peoples of the earth.

Article 5. Articles of Faith

(Adapted from the 1853 New Hampshire Confession of Faith)

I. The Scriptures
We believe the Bible is the very word of God. The 66 books of the Bible are God's exclusive and divine revelation to us, written by God's prophets and apostles by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Bible in its original manuscripts contains truth without any mixture of error, and is fully trustworthy. It is the revelation of God's redemptive story. Therefore, it is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union. The Scriptures are the supreme standard by which all human conduct, teaching, and thought should be tried.

II. The Triune God
We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God. He is an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Creator and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, glorious in holiness, and worthy of all worship, trust, and love. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, executing distinct but complimentary offices in the great work of redemption.

> **IIa. Father**
> The Father is the first member of the Trinity, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all that come to Him through Jesus Christ. We believe that He orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace.
>
> **IIb. Son**
> Jesus, the Son, is coequal, consubstantial (i.e. having the same substance, nature, or essence), and coeternal with the Father. He was with the Father in the beginning and all things were made through Him. He was born of a virgin, becoming fully human that He might succeed where Adam failed and save all

those who put their trust in His substitutionary, propitiatory death. He was raised bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, and will make a personal, visible return to earth.

IIc. Holy Spirit
We believe in the Holy Spirit who is sent from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. We believe that He is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration; it is His work to indwell, sanctify, instruct, empower for service, and seal until the day of redemption all who believe on Jesus Christ. We believe He indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. In all the divine attributes, He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father and the Son.

III. The Fall of Man
We believe that Adam was a historical figure created in holiness, in the image of God, and under the law of his Creator. By rejecting God, Adam, and all mankind with him, fell from that state, and has ever since been under the curse of sin and death. By nature we lack the holiness required by God; we are inclined to evil and justly condemned under God's eternal wrath, without defense or excuse.

IV. The Way of Salvation
We believe that the salvation of sinners is all of grace, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By the Father's design, Jesus freely took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and was perfectly obedient to the Father in all things. By His vicarious, substitutionary death He made full atonement for our sins, breaking the curse. Having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in heaven, qualified to be our suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior in every way.

V. Justification
We believe that God justifies the one who places faith in Jesus. When God justifies, the believer is declared righteous, not according to any works of righteousness which we have done, but only through faith in Jesus' redemptive work. His perfect righteousness is freely imputed (credited) to our account, declaring us simultaneously not-guilty and righteous. This brings us into a state of peace and favor with God.

VI. The Freeness of Salvation
We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel, and that it is necessary for all to accept them by obedient faith. The gospel is able to save the greatest sinner on earth, but man refuses the blessing of salvation, when by his own inherent depravity he voluntarily rejects the gospel, which brings upon him just condemnation.

VII. Grace in Regeneration
We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again. By the power of the Holy Spirit and in connection with the Word of God, regeneration creates in the mind and heart an inclination toward God, securing our voluntary and joyful obedience to the gospel. Its evidence appears in the fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

VIII. Repentance and Faith
We believe that repentance and faith are inseparable graces, accomplished in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. Being deeply convinced of our guilt, and helplessness, and the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God in humility, confessing our sins, and pleading for mercy. At the same time we gladly rely on Jesus as the only and all sufficient Savior, yielding to Him as Lord.

IX. Election
We believe that election in Christ is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign grace, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable. It excludes all boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God and active imitation of His free mercy. It is the foundation of Christian assurance. All who truly believe the gospel are of the elect.

X. Sanctification
We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are partakers of His holiness. It is a progressive work that begins in regeneration and carries on in the hearts of God's people by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord sanctifies us through the continual use of appointed means – especially the Word of God, the community of faith, and prayer.

XI. The Perseverance of Saints
We believe that only those who endure to the end are the true people of God, having their persevering attachment to Christ as the mark that distinguishes them from those who make superficial professions of faith. God's providence watches over their welfare, and they are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation.

XII. The Church
We believe that the church is the Body of Christ, and Christ is our Head. We believe the universal church is made up of all true believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ from the beginning of time until the end of time. We believe a local church is a community of believers in Jesus who have covenanted in the faith and fellowship of the gospel regularly

gathering for the right preaching of God's Word and rightly practicing the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

XIII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper
We believe that baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in display of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It symbolizes our death to sin and resurrection to a new life, and is required for church membership. By the Lord's Supper the members of the church receive the bread and the cup, proclaiming the good news of Jesus' death on our behalf. We believe that these two ordinances should be solemnly and joyfully observed, administered by the church until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not believe these ordinances convey saving grace upon the recipient. However, they are means by which God reveals His gospel and by which He brings loving encouragement into the lives of His people.

XIV. The Lord's Day
The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be consistent with the Christian's conscience under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

XV. Marriage
Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

XV. Civil Government
We believe that civil government is ordained by God for the interests and good order of human society. Civil leaders are to be prayed for, honored, and obeyed except in matters opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of conscience and King of kings.

XVI. The World to Come
We believe that this world is fading away and the fullness of God's kingdom is approaching. At the last day Christ will descend from heaven for the final judgment; the dead will rise from the grave, and He will judge the living and the dead. A solemn separation will then take place, the unrighteous facing God's eternal wrath and

punishment in hell, and those found righteous in Christ entering an eternal and perfect fellowship with God in a new heavens and new earth.

Article 6. Church Covenant

(Adapted from J. Newton Brown's 1853 The Baptist Church Manual)

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

We engage therefore by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to honor its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to be actively involved in the corporate worship and small group life of this church; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministries and expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel to all nations.

We also engage to be zealous in our corporate and individual efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior through the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ among all peoples; to seek the salvation of our family, friends, and acquaintances; to maintain personal and family devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to walk watchfully and uprightly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our commitments, exemplary in our behavior, and encouraging in our conversation; to avoid all gossip and sinful anger; to abstain from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate sincere concern for one another's joys and sorrows; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the commands of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we leave this church body we will, as soon as possible, carry out the spirit of this covenant by uniting with another local church where we will be taught to trust and obey the Word of God.

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip us with everything good that we may do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Article 7. Membership

The membership of this church will consist of persons who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession, who affirm and submit to the views of faith, doctrine, and practice of this church, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have been received to its membership according to the By-Laws of this Church.

Article 8. Governance and Leadership

Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the congregation of the church is the final authority within this local church.

The officers of the church will be elders and deacons. The purpose of the officers of the church is to lovingly govern, serve, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.

The leadership of the church will be vested in the council of elders who are responsible for governing the church, teaching the Word of God, and tending the flock of God in this church. The elders will be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.

Deacons will assist the council of elders by performing services of advice, administration, and implementation.

Article 9. Amendments

The Constitution, Articles of Faith, and Church Covenant may be amended by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment will have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and will have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such a vote.

BY-LAWS

Article 1. Purpose of the By-Laws

The purpose of these by-laws is to guide the church in governing herself under the direction of the Holy Scriptures. These by-laws are intended to liberate the church to move swiftly and safely in fulfilling her purpose in the world, and they are also intended to protect her from unbiblical and destructive abuses of power. Each individual article must be read in light of the whole set of by-laws, and in light of our Constitution, Articles of Faith, and Church Covenant.

Article 2. Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications for Membership

A. To qualify for membership in this church, a person must repent of his or her sins, confess faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, give evidence of regeneration by means of living consistently with his or her profession, have been baptized by immersion following his or her regeneration, and wholeheartedly believe in the Christian faith as it is revealed in the Bible. Each member must not hold settled convictions that are contrary to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Articles of Faith, and each member must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

B. The elders will be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership by personal interview. In making their determination, they will rely on the person's confession of repentance and faith, evidence of regeneration in his or her life, and, when possible, a letter from the person's previous church.

Section 2 – Admission of Members

A. The admission of members will be by vote of the church upon recommendation of the elders. This vote may take place at any regular or special meeting of the church, and it will require a three-quarters vote of the members present to admit a new member into the church. Once admitted, members will relinquish their membership in any other churches.

B. Baptism will be administered to a candidate for membership who is recommended to the congregation by the elders and who meets the above qualifications for membership (excluding baptism). At any regular or special meeting of the church, a three-quarters vote of the members present is required for a candidate to be admitted for baptism. The candidate will then be baptized at the church's earliest convenience and will become a member upon receiving baptism.

Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

A. Members will be expected to participate actively in the life of the church by regularly attending its scheduled meetings, by faithfully observing its ordinances, namely baptism and the Lord's Supper, by conscientiously giving to support its work and causes, by submitting to its discipline and instruction, by attending its members' meetings, and by voting on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership, and on all other matters submitted to the congregation's vote.

B. A New Testament Christian is a minister. Membership is ministry. Each member is expected to be faithful to a New Testament Christian life as outlined in the Church Covenant and to recognize that he or she is the basic minister of the church. Therefore, each member will diligently seek to discover his or her gifts and areas of ministry in order to become equipped for and to fulfill that ministry.

C. Only members of this congregation will be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Non-members may also serve the church for purposes of administration, maintenance, professional consultation, and construction, at the discretion of the elders.

Section 4 – Watchcare Membership

A. Those who are living in the Augusta area temporarily and are members of an evangelical church may apply for watchcare membership. The qualifications are identical to those of full membership with the exception that the individual must retain membership in his or her home church. A letter of commendation will be sought from the applicant's home church. Watchcare membership will immediately end upon the termination of residence in the Augusta area.

B. Disciplinary measures will be the same as those for full members except the home church will be notified of the actions taken. While watchcare members are encouraged to participate in the meetings and ministries of the church, they will not be eligible to vote or stand for any office.

Section 5 – Church Discipline

A. Formative discipline is inherent in the preaching, teaching, and exercise of other ministries in the church. When formative discipline fails due to sin, corrective discipline is then necessary.

B. Corrective discipline is for the good of the church and the member who has sinned. It should never be entered into lightly, and the goal of corrective discipline is always

redemptive, that is, the goal is always the salvation and holiness and good of the one being disciplined.

If any member is consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ or His church may be dishonored, then that individual will be subject to corrective discipline. Corrective discipline will be carried out under the authority and guidance of Scriptures pertinent to it, including but not limited to: Matthew 18:15-17, I Corinthians 5:1-8, Galatians 6:1-2, I Thessalonians 5:14. Such discipline may include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication. Excommunication from the membership of the church may occur by recommendation of the elders and a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting.

It is desirable in the case of public sin that a confession be made before the church so that the church can freely extend forgiveness. Such public confession is especially necessary in the case of elders and deacons (I Timothy 5:19-20; Galatians 2:11-14).

C. The purpose of corrective discipline should be:

- For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the disciplined party (see Hebrews 12:1-11; Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5);

- For instruction in righteousness and the good of other Christians as an example to them (see I Corinthians 5:11, I Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 10:24-25);

- For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5:6-7; Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 21:2, 7-8)

- For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10-14); and

- Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; John 15:8; Ephesians 1:4, 5:27; I Peter 2:12).

Section 6 – Termination of Membership

Termination of membership will be recognized by the church following the death of a member or upon his or her transfer of membership to another church. Membership may be terminated as an act of corrective discipline upon the recommendation of the elders and a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting.

Article 3. Meetings

Section 1 – Worship Meetings

Worship services will be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines. The pastor may cancel any worship service on a specific occasion due to inclement weather or special occurrence(s), if he sees fit. In his absence, the elders may act with like discretion.

Section 2 – Members' Meeting

A. In every meeting together, members will act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. A regular members' meeting will be held at least once a quarter and at a time agreed upon by the elders and acceptable to the church. The date, time, and purpose of all members' meetings must be announced at Sunday services for at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum will be understood to be met by those members present.

C. The chairman of the elders will moderate members' meetings. In the absence or incapacity of the chairman of elders, the elders will appoint another elder to perform these duties.

D. An annual members' meeting will be held for the election of officers and approval of the new year's budget no more than three nor less than one month prior to the new year. The fiscal year will commence on January 1.

E. Special members' meetings may be called by the elders or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of 10% of the membership. If a special meeting is called for by 10% of the members, this meeting will take place within one month of the request.

F. Emergency members' meetings may be called by a majority of the elders. All resolutions passed at emergency meetings are subject to review at the next regular members' meeting.

G. Meetings will be run according to *The Robert's Rules of Order*. On any matter that is brought to vote, a two-thirds vote is needed for it to pass (unless the Constitution or By-Laws specifies otherwise). Abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

Article 4. Officers

Section 1 – General Statement

A. The biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition to these offices, our church will recognize the administrative offices of clerk and treasurer, whose responsibilities will be outlined in the By-Laws. All officers must be members of this church prior to taking office or assuming their responsibilities. No one may hold more than one of these four offices in the church at the same time.

B. Any officer of the church who is correctively disciplined will also be removed from the office that he or she holds at the discretion of the elders.

Section 2 – Elders

A. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-7, 20:28-31; I Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:14; and I Peter 5:1-4, the elders will provide general oversight for the ministry and resources of the church. They will seek the mind of Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as they shepherd the flock of God. They will be given to prayer, study, and teaching the Word; they will gladly and honorably shepherd the flock, teach and exhort, refute those who contradict the truth, pray for the sick, and care for the souls of the church members.

Elders will also be responsible for interviewing candidates for membership, examining and recommending all prospective candidates for offices, overseeing the work of the deacons as well as appointed church officers and committees, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the church, conducting worship services, administering baptism and the Lord's Supper, equipping the members for the work of the ministry, providing guidance and counsel to those who desire to pursue full-time Christian ministry, encouraging sound doctrine, directing the process of church discipline, and mobilizing the church for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

B. The elders will be no less than three men who meet the qualifications of the office as set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Only men can serve as elders in accord with I Timothy 2:12, 3:2-7; Titus 1:5-9, and following the example elsewhere in Scripture. Elders may or may not be in the regular pay of the church. If an insufficient number of qualified men are available then the church is not required to have three elders and should seek the leadership of a biblically qualified preaching elder, Titus 1:5.

C. Upon election, these men will be recognized by the church as gifted and willing to serve in this calling, and they will be received as gifts of God to the church and set apart as elders. This recognition will be reaffirmed by the church triennially. After a lay elder

has served two consecutive three-year terms, he will not be eligible for re-election to the eldership for at least one year.

D. Elders may establish and oversee ministry positions and committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. They may propose paid staff positions and will present a job description for such positions for congregational vote. The elders will have responsibility for the employment, supervision, evaluation, and termination of all staff members. They may act without congregational approval in the employment and termination of non-pastoral staff. The employment and termination of pastoral staff will take place upon the recommendation of the elders followed by a congregational vote. Should the need arise, the elders may appoint a member to an "acting office," excluding the office of elder. This appointment would then be subject to a congregational vote at the next members' meeting.

E. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or dismissal. Any member with reason to believe that an elder ought to be dismissed should express such concern to the elders, and, if need be, only afterwards to the congregation. Any such action ought to be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 and the Apostle Paul in I Timothy 5:17-21. Any elder may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any formally called members' meeting of the church.

F. The elders will elect a chairman who will chair all elders' meetings and act as moderator in members' meetings. In his absence, the elders will appoint another to fill his place. For the purpose of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the state of Georgia, the chairman of the elders will serve as the president of the corporation.

G. From time to time the church may grant an elder an appropriate sabbatical, which must be passed by a three-quarters vote of the members present at formally called members' meeting.

Section 3 – Pastor (Preaching Elder)

A. The pastor will perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above. He will be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching the Word of God. In the absence or incapacity of the preaching elder, the other elders will assume the responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

B. The office of pastor will not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 5, Section 2, for the elders.

Section 4 – Deacons

A. In keeping with the principle set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7, deacons will be given to serving the temporal needs of the church so that the elders can be given

to prayer and the ministry of the Word. The temporal needs of the church include, but are not limited to: mercy ministries, accommodations for public worship, administration, and overseeing the properties of the church.

The responsibilities of deacons do not include preaching, teaching, or the spiritual or financial oversight of the church, which are responsibilities of the elders. Deacons exercise a ministry of service, not a ministry of spiritual leadership. Although they may teach and preach in contexts in which they are not infringing upon the oversight duties of elders (Acts 6-7:53; Titus 2:3), the responsibility of the deacons is to serve the church by assisting the elders.

B. At the recommendation of the elders, the church may recognize deacons to serve in specific capacities as needs arise in the church. The number of deacons will be determined by the needs of the ministry and the qualifications of men in the church. The deacons may be organized by the elders in the most fitting way to accomplish their mission. With the agreement of the elders, each deacon may assemble a team of members who will assist him in fulfilling his particular ministry.

C. Only men may serve as deacons in accordance with I Timothy 2:12, 3:8-13, and Acts 6:1-7. These men will be received as gifts of God to the church and set apart as deacons. This recognition will be reaffirmed triennially. After a deacon has served two consecutive three-year terms, he will not be eligible for re-election to the deaconate for at least one year.

D. A deacon's term of office may be terminated by resignation, discipline, dismissal, or when the elders judge that a particular deacon's area of ministry is no longer needed. In the absence of a needed deacon, the elders may appoint an "acting deacon." The appointment of an "acting deacon" will be subject to a congregational vote, requiring a three-quarters approval, at the next members' meeting.

Section 5 – Clerk

A. The clerk will record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings, to keep an accurate membership role, and to render reports as requested by the elders, the deacons, or the church. The clerk will ensure that this Constitution and By-Laws are updated and available for members.

B. The clerk will be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year. In the absence of the clerk, the elders will appoint an "acting clerk" to fulfill these duties. The appointment of an "acting clerk" will be subject to a congregational vote, requiring three-quarters approval, at the next members' meeting.

C. For the purpose of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the state of Georgia, the clerk will serve as the secretary of the corporation.

Section 6 – Treasurer

A. The treasurer, who will not be an active elder, deacon, or paid pastoral staff member, will ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer will also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer will render to the elders at least once in every year, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer will also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at the regular members' meetings.

B. The treasurer will be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a one year term. In the absence of the treasurer the elders will appoint an "acting treasurer" to fulfill these duties. The appointment of an "acting treasurer" will be subject to a congregational vote, requiring a three-quarters approval, at the next members' meeting.

C. For the purpose of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the state of Georgia, the treasurer will serve as the treasurer of the corporation.

Article 5. Election of Officers

Section 1 – Principles

The election of officers ought to be undertaken with substantial prayer both individually and corporately, and the process ought to express that spirit of mutual trust, openness and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 – Selection of Officers

A. The election of officers will be held at the annual members' meeting of the church. The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Names of the nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, or treasurer will be presented by the elders.

B. The elders will present to the church a list of nominees for offices at least two weeks prior to voting. Any member with reason to believe a candidate nominated by the elders is unqualified for an office should express this concern to the elders as soon as possible

and as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting at which the church votes on the candidates.

C. The chairman of the elders will declare elected all persons receiving a three-quarter majority of all votes cast for any office. The persons elected will assume office at the beginning of the fiscal year unless another date has been specifically designated. Elections to fill any vacancies that may occur during the course of the year may be held upon the recommendation of the elders at any members' meeting. In order to insure the smooth flow of ministries and to assist the creation of new ministries, the elders may appoint a member to an "active position" until the congregation can vote on this decision.

Section 3 – Calling of a Pastor (Preaching Elder)

A. In calling a man to this position, the same basic process outlined for calling an elder must be followed.

B. In addition, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the gifts and spiritual life of any potential preaching elder. In selecting a pastor his gifts in preaching and teaching and his commitment to minister personally to the members of this church will be prerequisites. The ability to preach will be assessed with particular care. Before voting, the church must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Articles of Faith and Church Covenant.

C. Only one man may be recommended at a time to the church for a given position. Following a candidate's being nominated to serve as pastor, notice of a pending church vote must be given at least two Sunday morning services prior to the vote at a members' meeting. A preaching elder must receive a vote of at least three-quarters of the members present to be elected.

D. No person will be selected to serve as pastor who has not first been recognized by the church as an elder. A person may be received as a member, recognized as an elder, and selected as a preaching elder in three separate motions during a single members' meeting.

Article 6. Indemnification

Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church will provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the

person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The church will purchase appropriate insurance to meet these potential liabilities.

Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification

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

Section 3 – Procedure

If a quorum of the elders (51% of the elders) is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Article 7. Dispute Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 6:1-11), the church will require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblical principles without reliance on the secular courts. When consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church will encourage the use of biblical principles and the avoidance of suits of law to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or non-Christian and whether individuals or corporate entities.

Article 8. Amendments

The by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment will have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and will have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.