

**BY LAWS
ARTICLE I**

MEMBERSHIP:

SECTION 1. Qualifications

The membership of this church shall consist of such persons as confess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord, have been accepted by vote of the church and have been scripturally baptized and entering into its covenant. (one of the following three)

- A. Transfer - Those coming from other churches of like faith and order may be accepted upon letter of transfer, dismissal, or satisfactory substitute therefore.
- B. Baptism - A person who has made a profession of faith in Christ as Savior and scripturally baptized.
- C. Statement of Faith – A person who comes by statement of Faith that Jesus Christ is Lord and believes in their heart that Jesus was raised from the dead and have been scripturally baptized.

SECTION 2. Acceptance

No person shall be accepted for membership by a vote of the church until a Pastor or Elder has had consultation with the prospective member or members on Articles of Faith and Doctrine, Constitution and By Laws. This requirement must be met within a reasonable amount of time of the person's decision to be united with this church.

SECTION 3. Duties

These individuals must have evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are living in accord with the affirmations of their faith and the Bible and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and active in the fellowship of Old Bethel Baptist Church in order to be considered in good standing with this church in preserving the harmony and unity of this body of believers. Such members as are in full and regular standing and do not hold letters of dismissal and not on the inactive roll and such only may act and vote in the transactions of the church. No member below the age of fourteen (14) shall have a vote on any matter before the church.

SECTION 4. Quorum

Twenty five (25) per cent of the active roll of membership shall constitute a quorum to hold and conduct regular business meetings. However, it shall be necessary for fifty (50) per cent of the active roll of membership, for the call of a new pastor or the dismissal of a pastor.

SECTION 5. Inactive Membership Roll

It is the duty of every member to be faithful in attendance at all services when it is humanly possible to do so. Any member, who has shown no interest in the church for a period of three (3) months and who, after earnest prayer and contacts by the pastor, elders and/or deacons continues to show no interest, shall be placed onto the inactive roll upon recommendation of the pastor, elders and/or deacons.

SECTION 6. Termination

- A. Any member in good and regular standing who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to any other Baptist church, of like faith and order, is entitled to receive it upon the members request.
- B. Should a member become an offence to the church and to her good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of the member's covenant vows, the church may terminate their membership, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such a member to repentance and amendment. (Matt. 18:15-17)
- C. All requests for termination membership or action looking thereto shall first be considered by the elders and/or deacons, who shall make recommendations to the church. (except for those under section 6.D)
- D. Those that have been inactive for a period of 1 year will be no longer considered members, after being reviewed by the elders and/or deacons.

SECTION 7. Restoration

Any person where membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the church.

- A. Upon evidence of their repentance and being reformed; or
- B. On account of having an inactive status, they show evidence of being active.

ARTICLE II

CHURCH OFFICERS:

SECTION 1. Pastor

A. Qualifications

Biblical requirements: I Timothy 3:1-11 and Titus 1:6.

Affiliation requirement: Must be a member in good standing of a Southern Baptist Church.

Ordination Requirement: He shall have been ordained by this church or by a Baptist church of like faith and order.

Church Requirement: Must agree and follow the church's Constitution and By Laws

B. Duties

The pastor is the spiritual leader of the congregation. He shall be in charge of the welfare and oversight of the church. He shall preside at all the church meetings of the congregation. He shall be the moderator at business meetings of the church when present. The pastor is a voting member of the congregation and a non-voting member of each church committee and organization. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff in performing their tasks.

C. Length Of Office

The pastor shall hold his office for an indefinite period of time with the understanding that he may offer his resignation at any regular service of the church. His service may be terminated by a majority vote of the congregation at any regular business meeting, provided that one month's notice of intention to vote or to call for a vote on that question shall have been given at any regular business meeting.

D. Calling A Pastor

1. Pulpit Committee

Whenever a vacancy occurs, a special business meeting shall be held as soon as possible after the vacancy for the purpose of selecting a pulpit committee. Each church member present shall list five (5) church members whom they wish to be the pulpit committee. The five receiving the most votes shall comprise the pulpit committee. Alternates will be selected in order of votes received.

The church shall assume all costs incurred by the committee in its work.

2. Interim Pastor

An Interim Pastor shall be considered as soon as possible to free the committee of the task of filling the pulpit each week, so they may put every effort to seeking a pastor. The Interim Pastor must be approved by a vote of seventy-five (75) per cent of the members present and voting. The pulpit committee shall be responsible for bringing a recommendation for compensation for the Interim Pastor. The Interim Pastor's duties shall be the same as a pastor.

3. Calling A Pastor

One prospect shall be considered at a time. With adequate information and references from qualified persons, the committee shall seek a well-rounded person who qualifies as a preacher, pastor, counselor, citizen, and representative of the church and community. Any potential pastor shall be in agreement with the principles and policies set forth in this Constitution and By-Laws. When all available information and references are compiled and committee is agreed, the nominee shall preach to the church both Sunday morning and evening. ALL information and qualifications will be presented to the congregation prior to his coming in view of the call. A vote by secret ballot will be held as soon

as possible to either accept or reject the nominee. A seventy-five (75) percent vote shall be required to call a pastor. The nominee shall be notified at once of the percentage he received.

E. Vacation-Revival-Sick Leave

The pastor shall be allowed two (2) weeks of vacation (including two (2) Sundays with full pay. He may also be absent with full pay for two (2) weeks (including two (2) Sundays) for revivals. A supply pastor will be paid by the church for these four Sundays.

Sick leave will be granted to, the pastor up to a period of two (2) weeks per year with full pay. If additional time is needed, it may be granted by a majority vote of the church.

F. Guest Speakers Or Musicians

When the Pastor invited guest speakers or musicians, an honorarium shall be provided through the taking of a love offering.

SECTION 2. Elders

A. Qualifications Of The Elder

Biblical Requirements: Acts 14:23, 16:4-5, Titus 1:5-9

Affiliation Requirements: He shall be a member of this church in good standing, for at least one year.

Requirement: He shall have been called by this church as an Elder.

Moral Requirements:

1. *By Faith obtained a good report* – Heb 11:1-2
2. *Blameless* - moral conduct: Titus 1:5-9
3. *Husband of one wife* - Titus 1:6
4. *Faithful children, ruleth well his own house* - Titus 1:6, 1 Tim 3:4-5
5. *Not soon angry* - Titus 1:7 not be arrogant or quick tempered
6. *Not given to wine* - Titus 1:7
7. *No striker* - Titus 1:7 not violent
8. *Not given to filthy lucre* - Titus 1:7 not dishonest with money
9. *Lover of hospitality and good men* - Titus 1:8 loving people and what is good
10. *Not a novice* – 1 Tim 3:6 Not a new believer

B. Responsibilities Of The Elder

In accordance with 1 Peter 5:1-5, 1 Timothy 5:17, Ephesians 4:11-16

1. *Feed the flock* - It is the duty and even more importantly that the elders' desire is to feed the spiritual food to the members.
2. *Take oversight, not by constraint* - Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly.
3. *Neither as being lords* - Don't rule but rather lead.
4. *Be subject one to another* - Serve each other with humility.
5. *Labor in the Word to Teach* - 1 Timothy 5:17
6. *Equip the saints to build up the body* – Ephesians 4:11-16

C. Elders' Meetings

Elders shall meet regularly each month. Any recommendations shall be presented to church at next regular or called business meeting.

SECTION 3. Deacons

A. Qualifications Of The Deacon

Biblical Requirements: I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:3.

Affiliation Requirements: He shall be a member of this church in good standing, for at least one year.

Moral Requirements:

1. Blameless moral conduct - I Timothy 3:8
2. Not given to much wine - 1 Timothy 3:8
3. Not pursuing dishonest gain - 1 Timothy 3:8
4. Blameless - 1 Timothy 3:10
5. Their wives must also have blameless moral conduct, must be sober, and faithful in all things - 1 Timothy 3:11
6. Husbands of one wife - I Timothy 3:12
7. Rule and manage their children and their homes well - 1 Timothy 3:12

B. Duties Of The Deacon Acts 6:3

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The deacons are to serve as advisors to the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. They are to consider and formulate plans for the constant progress of the church in carrying out its stated objectives. In the absence of the pastor, the deacons are to prepare and serve the Lord's Supper and aid in the ordinance of baptism.

They are to establish and maintain personal fraternal relations with all members of the church. This does not delegate to the Deacon the right of authority over members of this church, but is to be advisory in nature only.

D. Election Of New Deacons

Name of person brought before church on regular business meeting and voted on by majority of church for a term of one (1) year as acting deacon.

E. Deacon Meetings

Deacons shall meet each month. Any recommendations shall be presented to church at next regular or called business meeting.

F. Number of Elders/Deacons

There shall be at least three (3) active Elders/Deacons for the first one hundred (100) members on the church roll. There shall be one (1) additional Elder/Deacon for each fifty (50) additional members on the membership roll. There shall not be less than three (3) Elders/Deacons except baring some unforeseen circumstances.

SECTION 4. Church Moderator

The moderator shall be the pastor of this church. In his absence, the chairman of Elder Body shall preside. If both the pastor and chairman of Elder Body are absent, the church clerk shall call the meeting to order and a moderator shall be elected for that meeting.

SECTION 5. Church Clerk

The church-elected clerk of the church shall keep, in a suitable book, a record of all actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters

of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice if necessary as indicated in these By-Laws, and prepare the annual associational report. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office, when one is maintained.

SECTION 6. Church Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of invoices approved and signed by authorized personnel all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The treasurer's report shall be reviewed annually by the Elder Body and presented to the church. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and upon its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church. The church treasurer shall serve as an ex officio member of the Finance Committee.

SECTION 7. Trustees

The Committee of 3 Trustees, elected for 1-2-3 years, and not annually and until their successors shall be appointed, will hold in trust the property of the church. They shall have the actual care of the place of worship, but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action. The Committee of Trustees shall have the power to organize themselves according to the needs of the church as a non-profit organization. The Committee of Trustees shall have authority to spend up to one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for emergency purposes not otherwise allocated in the budget.

ARTICLE III

SECTION 1. Budget Committee

This committee shall be composed of the following: Pastor, Treasurer, one Elder/Deacon, one Trustee and one member at large. Its duties shall be further elaborated under Article IV, Church Finances.

SECTION 2. Other Committees

Other committees shall be provided as needed. The duties of such committees shall be provided by vote of the church.

ARTICLE IV

Church Finances

This church recognizes and adopts the Scriptural method of "Tithes and Offerings" as its plan of finance.

SECTION 1.

A budget shall be submitted to the church for approval at the first of the year, or whenever the financial status of the church so warrants; an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amounts needed and sought for all expenses and causes.

SECTION 2.

All bills shall be paid when due. Money designated in the budget shall be paid monthly unless otherwise indicated. Individuals may always be permitted to designate the manner in which their gifts may be distributed.

SECTION 3.

There shall be unified budget, with one church treasurer. Special offerings may be taken whenever the church so desires. Individuals may make special offerings at any time.

SECTION 4.

All funds shall pass through the hands of the Treasurer and shall be properly recorded, unless the church shall indicate otherwise.

SECTION 5.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes. Each member shall be encouraged to tithe. Individual Budget Offering Envelopes shall be supplied to each qualified member for use in making weekly contributions.

ARTICLE V

MEETINGS

SECTION 1. Worship

- A. Public service shall be held morning and evening on the Lord's Day and on Wednesday evening each week.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least each quarter or whenever the Pastor directs.
- C. Occasional religious meetings may be called by the Pastor at his discretion or by vote of the church.
- D. The church shall endeavor to try to conduct at least one (1) Revival Meetings each year, with the Pastor suggesting the speaker or speakers for the meetings.

SECTION 2. Business

- A. Regular business meetings will be held once a month. All business matters may be transacted during this meeting if the proper percentage of membership is there to constitute a quorum.
- B. At any of the regular worship services, the church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of new members, but not upon other business.
- C. The pastor may, and shall, when requested by the elders, deacons, trustees, or a standing committee, call from the pulpit special business meetings, the particular object of the meeting being clearly stated in the notice. Special meetings of the church may also be called by the clerk upon the written application of any five adult members specifying the object thereof, which notice shall be read at the public service on the next Lord's Day preceding the day fixed for such meeting.
- D. The Parliamentary authority exercised in this church shall be Robert's Rules of Order

ARTICLE VI

Statements by the Church

SECTION 1. Statement of Biblical Authority

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of

mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For the purposes of church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the pastor and/or designated leadership of Old Bethel Baptist Church are the church's interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

SECTION 2. Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

1. Our Biblical Definition of Marriage and Sexuality

We, as the congregation of Old Bethel Baptist Church, affirm that the term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is: marriage is ordained and defined by God in the Holy Scriptures which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, both of which are of legal age and mutual consent. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person, whether it be of different faith, race, gender, national heritage, and sexual preference must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity.

Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the church. This is our religious conviction based on the Holy Bible. Gen. 2:24; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-32; 1 Cor. 5:1-2; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23; Mark 10:6-9

2. Our Conduct and Policy

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

3. Our Policy and Religious Conviction Concerning Weddings and Funerals

No same sex, transgender, or polygamist marriages shall be performed by the current pastor or any minister licensed by Old Bethel Baptist Church.

The facilities, equipment and furnishings, and the property grounds of Old Bethel Baptist shall not be used, borrowed, or loaned to accommodate wedding ceremonies, wedding receptions, anniversaries, fellowship functions, and funerals that promote the union, celebration, or recognition of the above-said .

The current pastor and licensed ministers of Old Bethel Baptist Church may minister and conduct funeral services of the above-said at a grave side or a secular funeral home at his discretion.

We view wedding ceremonies as a religious service of celebration and commitment and we view funeral services as a religious service of bereavement.

4. Our Policy and Religious Conviction on Hiring and Dismissal

We reserve the right as a congregation to only hire those who are in agreement with our policies and Biblical beliefs.

We reserve the right as a congregation to dismiss one from employment of Old Bethel Baptist Church, those who have violated our Biblical standards of conduct and lifestyle.

SECTION 3. Statement on the Use of Church Property

1. Our Policy on the Use of Church Vehicles

Any vehicles, trailers, tractors, etc. that are titled as the Property of Old Bethel Baptist Church are not for personal use or rent but shall only be used within the ministries and missions of the church such as transportation to worship, transportation to camps, functions, mission trips, etc.

2. Our Policy on the Use of Buildings and Grounds

Use of our facilities and furnishings are first and foremost for the ministries and mission of Old Bethel Baptist Church such as worship, teaching, ministries, and church groups, and anything related to the church functions and events. Members may borrow tables and chairs and other items upon approval of the church office. Members may also use the gym, kitchen, and pavilion for personal uses such as weddings, reunions, birthday parties, funerals etc., but must obtain permission from the church office and clearance on our church calendar. All functions must follow our guideline policies for these events. Church functions and ministry functions take precedent over personal events and functions.

3. Our Policy on the Use of the Cemetery

Bethel Cemetery (Silent Hill Cemetery) is the private property of Old Bethel Baptist Church. We will try to pursue the upkeep and maintenance of the grounds. Since there are unmarked graves on the hill, burial is open on the north and east flat. Church members and loved ones have first priority in burial. The Cemetery is open also for the surrounding community for burial. We also may grant permission for burial for charitable cases under recommendation by the funeral home or church. Plots for burial must be approved by a designated person appointed by the pastor and plot must be checked to see if it is empty. Plots are basically on a first come basis. Families that have love ones buried there may be given plots next to their loved one's graves. There is no charge for burial. Opening of the grave is not the responsibility of the Church. Donations are always accepted toward upkeep of the cemetery.

ARTICLE VII

AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and accompanying By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at any annual meeting of the church, or at a meeting specially called for that purpose. The proposed amendment being inserted in the call, but no change, shall be made in "Articles of Faith" and "Covenant" except by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all the members of the church present entitled to vote, said proposed change having been laid before the church in writing at a business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed action and read from the pulpit on the next Lord's Day succeeding such proposal.

These were updated and approved on May 16th 2021