

**Constitution and Bylaws
Portland Avenue Baptist Church
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

Adopted November 12, 2023

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Preamble

We, the members of Portland Avenue Baptist Church, declare and establish this Constitution and Bylaws for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, for the orderly governing of this body of believers, to secure the liberty of each member, and to secure the independence and freedom of action of this body in its relationship to churches, conventions, and other orders or Christian entities.

We declare that this body of believers consists of professed born-again people who have voluntarily become a part of this church for Christian fellowship and the spreading of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We engage in this work realizing that it is the greatest task in the world and has an eternal impact.

We understand that to accomplish this task we must work with integrity and diligence. We realize that time is limited in which to work and that our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to expectantly wait for His return, which could be at any moment.

Point of interest: There were 322 charter members from May 1934 through February 1936.

Constitution of Portland Avenue Baptist Church

Article I - Name

This body of believers shall be known as “PORTLAND AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH,” whose address is 1301 North Portland Avenue, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. For business purposes, this body shall be known as Portland Avenue Baptist Church, a perpetual religious corporation incorporated under the laws of the state of Oklahoma.

Article II - Statement of Faith

Section 1, The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Psalm 19:7-10, 2 Timothy 3:16

Section 2, God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all-powerful and all-knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him, we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5, Ephesians 4:6

Sub-section 1, God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving, and wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1, Galatians 4:6

Sub-section 2, God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.

Isaiah 7:14, Colossian 1:15-20

Sub-section 3, God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination, He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He calls men to the Savior and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration, He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Isaiah 61:1-3, 1 Corinthians 2:10-14

Section 3, Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His image. He created them, male and female, as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning, man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30, Acts 17:26-31

Section 4, Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerated person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15, John 3:3-21

Section 5, God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3, Romans 8:28-39

Section 6, The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the

Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors/elders and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all ages, believers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

Ephesians 1:22-23,

In addition to the core beliefs and supporting Scriptures listed above, Portland Avenue Baptist Church affirms the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000

Article III - Statement of Purpose

Portland Avenue Baptist Church exists to glorify God by making and maturing disciples of all nations.

Article IV - Church Covenant

The church covenant is a consensus (not a dogma or litany) of what we believe the Bible teaches that a church should be.

This covenant is as follows:

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

We commit, 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 sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also commit to maintain family and private devotions; to educate our children in the faith; to seek the salvation of our family and friends; to walk in purity in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our actions, and exemplary in our behavior; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and excessive anger; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further commit to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay. We moreover commit, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, to unite with another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Article V - Church Character

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is not subject to any outside committee, body of elders or deacons, individual, or group of individuals who may claim or try to exercise authority. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligation to mutual counsel and cooperation with others which are common among Southern Baptists. Insofar as is practical and possible this church will cooperate with and support the Metro Baptist Network, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (Oklahoma Baptists), and the Southern Baptist Convention. However, this church does not join, cooperate, or affiliate with any group or organization that is not compatible with the tenets of those mentioned above.

Article VI - Amendment or Revocation

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed, in full or in part, from time to time, by a 75% affirmative vote of those church members present and voting thereon; at any regular or special called Family Meeting (business meeting) provided that notice to revoke or amend is presented in writing to the church clerk and the same be printed in the church bulletin on at least two different occasions.

Bylaws of Portland Avenue Baptist Church

Article I - Membership

This is an autonomous but equitable Baptist church under the leadership of Jesus Christ. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership. The membership of this church shall consist of such persons who publicly confess the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, have experienced believer's baptism (immersion) by this church or a church of like faith and practice, and are accepted by a majority vote of this body. Members are urged to attend all worship services of the church, give regularly to its support and causes, and participate in its organized work.

Section 1, Qualifications for Membership

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ and give evidence of regeneration; have been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration; and wholeheartedly believe in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the church covenant. The pastors/elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith and demonstration of such faith, as the pastors/elders deem appropriate.

Section 2, Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall have completed the required prospective members' class and have affirmed and signed the church covenant. Applicants shall then be recommended by the pastors/elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and they shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3, Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in any of the following ways: (1) death of a member; (2) dismissal to another church of like faith and practice; or (3) dismissal by action of this church as a result of church discipline.

Section 4, Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accordance with the duties stated in the church covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only members shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church; non-members may serve on an ad hoc basis with the approval of the pastors/elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all Family Meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Section 5, Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties as outlined in the church covenant or constitution or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the pastors/elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the pastors/elders or congregation, suspension from participating in the observance of the Lord's Supper for a definite period, deposition from office, and termination of membership (see Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20). The purpose of such discipline should be:

For the repentance, reconciliation, restoration, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined.

Psalm 119:115, Galatians 6:1-5

For the instruction in righteousness and spiritual benefit of other Christians, as an example to them.

Proverbs 13:20, Romans 15:14

For the purity of the church as a whole.

1 Corinthians 5:6-7, Ephesians 5:27

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians.

Proverbs 28:7, Matthew 5:13-16

And supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

Deuteronomy 5:11, 1 Peter 2:12

Article II - Functions of the Church

Section 1, Worship Services

Worship services shall be held on the Lord's Day (Sundays), and other services, such as revivals, conventions, Bible studies, and special planning, shall be held as may be deemed necessary or appropriate. Any exception to holding worship services on Sundays is to be determined by the pastors/elders.

Section 2, Ordinances of the Church

There were two ordinances established in the New Testament church. These ordinances have no saving efficacy and possess no power of themselves to impart a special grace. They are symbols of important truths and are to be observed in obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). These ordinances are baptism and the Lord's Supper and should be observed in that order.

Sub-section 1, Baptism

Baptism is an act of immersion in water to be administered by the church. The church (not any individual) baptizes by authorizing their pastor or any other person to perform the act for them. The act of baptism is symbolic and expresses three truths: it points back to the burial and resurrection of our Lord; it proclaims a transforming experience in the believer's life—the death of the old person of sin and the raising of a new person in Christ; and it expresses the blessed hope of a glorious resurrection of the body at the return of the Lord.

This ordinance shall be observed from time to time, as often as requested by qualifying persons, as soon as possible after the church authorizes such observance.

Sub-section 2, Lord's Supper

This ordinance of the church is a memorial instituted by the Lord Himself in the upper room on the night before His death on the cross. It shall be observed not less than four times each year in a worship service and participated in by those who have met the conditions laid down in the New Testament, namely: saving faith and baptism. It is to be understood that the elements are symbolic of the broken body and the shed blood of the Savior. One great purpose of the observance is to proclaim the death of our Lord (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The ordinance shall be administered by pastors/elders and deacons as authorized by the church.

Article III – Quorum

A quorum of the church shall be composed of those church members present and voting in any regular or duly called special Family Meeting. Regular Family Meetings shall be held at the church not less than six times per year at the discretion of the church.

Article IV - Church Officers, Committees, and Employees

Section 1, Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are pastors/elders (also referred to as bishops or overseers in the New Testament) and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes various other ministerial and support positions under these bylaws.

Section 2, Elders

The elders shall be composed of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The elder body shall be composed of both staff elders (pastors and associate pastors) and lay elders. A majority of the active eldership shall be composed of church members who do not receive their primary pay from the church. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles outlined in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

Nominations for elder candidates will be submitted by the church to the elder body. The elders will do the initial elder candidate reviews and recommend qualified nominees who would best represent the church in unity and diversity. The elder candidates will be introduced to familiarize the church with their testimony, family, and area of service. This process will be followed by at least two weeks to allow for any questions concerning their qualifications. Any concerns from the church body can be brought to the attention of the elders by any member of the church. The elders will then seek the mind of Christ and through unanimity make the final selection of elder candidates to be voted upon by the church. Elder candidates must receive a vote of at least 85% of the members present to be approved to serve.

Upon ordination, these men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church every three years. After an elder, other than the senior or associate pastor(s), has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may be elected to the office of elder again only after a sabbatical of at least one year.

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any elder may be dismissed by a 75% vote of the members present at any Family Meeting of the church.

The pastors/elders shall be responsible for examining and instructing prospective members; examining and recommending all prospective candidates for offices and positions; overseeing the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees; establishing unpaid administrative positions, teams, or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church; conducting worship services; administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; equipping the membership for the work of the ministry; encouraging sound doctrine and practice; admonishing and correcting error; overseeing the process of church discipline; coordinating and promoting the ministries of the church; and mobilizing the church for global evangelization. The pastors/elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

Section 3, Senior Pastor

The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of a pastor/elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the vocational ministry of preaching and teaching. A candidate will be voted on by ballot and must receive a vote of at least 85% of the members present to be approved to serve.

His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation, or the term limitation set out in Article IV, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article IV, Section 8.

He shall regularly preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and perform such other duties as outlined in the senior pastor job description.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor, the pastors/elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated. In the event of involuntary termination said action must come from the personnel committee in consultation with the pastors/elders and will require 75% vote of the members present.

Section 4, Associate Pastors

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of an associate. An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of a pastor/elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to vocational ministry. A candidate will be voted on by ballot and must receive a vote of at least 85% of the members present to be approved to serve.

His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation, or the term limitation set out in Article IV, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article IV, Section 8.

He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of elder, or as outlined in an associate pastor job description.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders. In the event of involuntary termination, said action must come from the personnel committee in consultation with the pastors/elders and will require a 75% vote of the members present.

Section 5, Ministry Staff

All ministry staff of the church shall serve under the direction of the pastors/elders and be responsible to them. The personnel committee will have the responsibility of identifying and presenting to the church qualified candidates for ministry staff positions. A candidate will be voted on by ballot and must receive a vote of at least 85% of the members present to be approved to serve. In the event of involuntary termination, said action must come from the personnel committee in consultation with the pastors/elders and will require a 75% vote of the members present.

Section 6, Support Staff

Support staff will be employed on an “as needed” basis to support the ministry and work of the church. The hiring process will be overseen by the pastors/elders or designated ministry staff. In the event of involuntary termination, said action must come from the personnel committee in consultation with the pastors/elders.

Section 7, Deacons

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. The church shall recognize persons who are giving of themselves in service to the church and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. They shall be elected to a term lasting three years, after which they may be reaffirmed by congregational vote for another three-year term.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, assist elders with the observance of the ordinances, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. The deacons shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the pastors/elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only. The deacons, with the agreement of the pastors/elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or teams of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Section 8, Search Committees

A search committee shall be elected by the church as needed for bringing qualified candidates before the church for calling a senior pastor or associate pastor. A search committee will be composed of five members and two alternates. Nominations for the search committee will be received by the church in a regular or special Family Meeting by written ballot. The following guidelines shall be given consideration when nominating a person to serve on a search committee: nominees must be members of Portland Avenue Baptist Church, they shall be regular in attendance, and they shall be regular financial contributors to the church. These ballots shall be turned over to the personnel committee, which shall determine whether the nominees meet the requirements for service and contact all qualified nominees to ascertain if they would be willing to serve if the church elected them. When the list is completed, the personnel committee shall prepare a ballot with each nominated person’s name on it. The church in a regular or special Family Meeting shall elect a search committee consisting of five members and two alternates. The five receiving the largest number of votes shall serve on the committee, and the next two highest shall be alternates if some member becomes unable to serve. The committee shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary and begin actively searching for a new senior pastor or associate pastor.

Section 9, Church Clerk

The church clerk (and alternate) shall be elected annually by the church. The duties thereof shall be to keep a record of all activities and business of the church and to report the same to the church in each regular Family Meeting.

Section 10, Church Treasurer

The church treasurer shall be elected annually by the church. The treasurer shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the finance committee. The treasurer shall make a detailed report to the church of all cash receipts, disbursements, and balances at each regular Family Meeting. The church shall furnish the treasurer with all supplies and materials needed to keep the records and reports required of him/her. The church, at its discretion, shall elect an assistant or associate to the treasurer. This officer, if elected, shall be responsible to the treasurer.

The treasurer shall be bonded or insured by the church, which shall pay for the cost of the bond or insurance. The books shall be reviewed by the finance committee not less than once each year. The findings of the review shall be made available to the church.

Section 11, Corporate Officers

The church shall elect three church members to serve as legal officers, or trustees, of the church. The chairman of the trustees shall be designated as the president of the corporation. The vice-chairman of the trustees shall be designated as vice-president of the corporation. The secretary of the trustees shall be designated as the secretary of the corporation. The trustees shall serve on a rotation basis with one trustee being elected each year to serve a three-year term.

The trustees, also known as corporate officers, shall only have authority as permitted by the church. When a signature of the church is required, they shall sign the legal papers or documents requiring such signature as authorized by the church.

Article V - Church Organization

Section 1, Committees

The church is organized for service by a committee organizational plan. The church recognizes four standing committees: **Finance, Personnel, Properties, and Hospitality**. The policies, duties, and ministries of these committees shall be listed in a committee handbook. This handbook shall be revised as necessary. Copies of the current handbook shall always be available to members at the church office.

Each committee shall be composed of five members. Members shall be elected for a term of three years, with one-third of the members rotating off each year. In case of a vacancy, an election shall be held to fill the unexpired portion of the term of the member vacating the office.

Section 2, Term of Elected Officers and Committee Members

The term of all the elected officers and committee members of the church, other than paid staff members, shall begin on September 1 and end on August 31. The committee year comprises these dates. Other offices, such as Sunday School and discipleship training, shall be elected in conformance with their programs.

Section 3, Family Meeting (Business Meeting)

A regular Family Meeting shall be held on a bimonthly basis on the second Sunday of the month, except that the date of said meeting may be changed in a given month if circumstances cause the best interests of the church to be served by the postponement. At the regular or postponed bimonthly Family Meeting, all reports of the activities of the church shall be made, including the reading and adoption of the minutes from the last regular Family Meeting and all subsequent, special, or called meetings. Copies of said reports shall be retained, filed, and preserved for church history. Any alteration of a regularly scheduled Family Meeting or any special called Family Meeting will require an announcement from the pulpit or printed in the church bulletin at least twice before the meeting.

Section 4, Voting

Members have the privilege and responsibility of voting on or affirming issues that are proposed by the elders or committees. A vote is a binding expression by the body of its support or non-support of an elder or committee proposal. An affirmation is a non-binding expression by the body of its support or non-support of an elder or committee proposal.

Issues that are to be voted on are the initial calling of an elder; approval of the calling of a senior or associate pastor or ministry staff member; changes or amendments to the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, or Bylaws; approval of the annual budget; dismissal of a senior or associate pastor or ministry staff member; capital expenditures above \$10,000; new building construction; purchase or sale of land; or the incurrence of debt. Each of these issues, except the call of a pastor, associate pastor, elder, or staff member, will require a 75% vote of approval of the members present to pass.

If the required approval percentage is not achieved on a proposal, the elder body may request member input and review the proposal. The proposal may be reconsidered at a later time.

Article VI – Marriage, Sexuality, and Gender

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 expresses our fundamental Biblical conviction that Christian marriage is defined as “the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime” (Section 18 of Baptist Faith and Message 2000).

We believe that Scripture teaches that sexual intimacy should occur between only a man and a woman who are married to each other, and that men and women should not engage in intimate sexual activity outside of marriage. We believe that Scripture also teaches that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, incest, any attempt to change one’s sex, disagreement with one’s biological sex, and pornography, is sinful and offensive to God.

However, we believe that Scripture requires that every person be shown compassion, kindness, respect, and dignity. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

As a local church, we believe that wedding ceremonies on church property are spiritual acts of worship of the God who created this divine institution. As such, weddings on church property shall be officiated

by one or more ordained ministers of the Gospel. The church may decline to make its facilities or ministers available for any wedding if it is determined that one or both of the parties are not biblically and/or legally qualified to marry. Such determinations may be made by the pastors/elders.

No minister or employee of the church shall officiate at any marriage ceremony unless such marriage is consistent with this policy.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Addendum I

Transition to Elders

To begin the process of selecting elders, nominations for elder candidates will be submitted by the church to a special committee composed of the pastor, deacon body, and transition team. This committee will do the initial elder candidate reviews and recommend qualified nominees who would best represent the church in unity and diversity. The elder candidates will be introduced to familiarize the church with their testimony, family, and area of service. This process will be followed by at least two weeks to allow for any questions concerning their qualifications. Any concerns from the church body can be brought to the attention of the committee by any member of the church. This committee will then seek the mind of Christ and through unanimity make the final selection of elder candidates to be voted upon by the church. Elder candidates must receive a vote of at least 85% by the members present to be approved to serve.