

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF SOUTHSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH
1028 SOUTH WATER AVENUE, GALLATIN, TENNESSEE 37066

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PREAMBLE

Believing that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church (all believers) and that He communicates with the Church (His Body) through the Scriptures as illuminated by the Holy Spirit, we, who rest our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, desire to band together around a common understanding of the nature and extent of the Scriptures that will reveal to us the mind of our Savior in order that

we might be faithfully obedient.

MORE PARTICULARLY, THE PURPOSES OF THIS CHURCH SHALL BE, AND ARE HEREBY DECLARED TO BE:

To bring glory to God, both in the earthly and heavenly realms, by committing ourselves together to worship God in spirit and in truth and by each member ministering to one another as each is gifted and empowered by the Spirit of God so that each can advance to a point characterized as mature while attaining a unity in relationship to one another and to the Son of God, resulting in true worship unto the true God and effective deployment for the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ;

To author, edit and publish such texts, pamphlets and other literature as shall grow out of, or be in any manner connected with, its objects and purposes and/or shall be of advantage or benefit thereto;

To establish and maintain as an integral part of the church ministry, ministries of education to children and adults in all facets of learning, thus to maintain a broad program of instruction, and to grant degrees, diplomas, or certificates consistent with the student's academic achievement;

To receive and accept gifts, legacies, annuities, devises, bequests, endowments and conveyances of property (real, personal, or mixed); to charge and collect fees if deemed advisable, or generally to accept and receive any other funds from whatsoever source; any or all of the foregoing, however, to be accepted only if consistent with the spirit and purposes of this church and if approved by the Elders;

To buy and otherwise acquire and own, hold, use, improve, rent, lease, mortgage and/or otherwise encumber and sell, or otherwise dispose of and deal in any and all kinds of and interests in, such property (real, personal and mixed) as may be necessary, desirable or convenient to carry on any of the purposes of this Church;

To do such other and further things in connection with, or appertaining to, the objects and purposes above outlined as may be consistent therewith and/or as may be reasonably necessary and

proper in furthering Christianity and spreading the gospel;

MOREOVER, AND IN SUMMARY OF ALL STATED ABOVE, the purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures in promoting His worship, evangelizing sinners, and edifying saints. Therefore, we are committed to the proclamation of God's perfect Law and the glorious Gospel of His grace through all the world and to the defense of "the faith once delivered unto the saints" ([Jude 3](#))

ARTICLE I --- NAME

The name of this church is Southside Baptist Church of Gallatin, Tennessee.

ARTICLE II --- AFFILIATION

SECTION I.

We acknowledge no ecclesiastical authority other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church ([Ephesians 5:23](#)) and who directs the affairs of the church through elders chosen and ordained according to the precepts of Holy Scripture. The elders themselves at all times and in all their activities stand under the authority of Holy Scripture.

SECTION 2.

Southside Baptist Church began as a Southern Baptist Church. We are evangelical, fundamental, sovereign grace oriented, and conservative in our beliefs and practice. We are an autonomous congregation. We support specific missionaries whom we believe to be sound in the faith. We teach from the Bible and use various fundamentally sound materials.

We rejoice that our identity and affiliation is first and foremost that of

being "in Christ" with all others who are saved by grace. Moreover, our identity is found in the person of Jesus Christ, not in a denominational or non-denominational tag. The fundamental issue is that we are disciples of Jesus, Christians, saints, and brothers and sisters with all who form the true Bride of Christ. In fact, we rejoice in our liberty and privilege of having fellowship with other Christians who are evangelical and fundamental even though their church title or "tag" might be different from ours.

The church may and does cooperate with other like-minded churches in matters of mutual interest and concern. We may seek the assistance and counsel of other churches in matters of special concern to us, but the decision of no other church or group of churches shall at any time be acknowledged as binding on this church.,

Furthermore, we believe that in the long history of the Church, the true saints of God have been and are known from time to time by various titles. We rejoice in the rich heritage of countless thousands who have gone before us, laying down their lives for Jesus and His glorious Gospel of Grace. We do especially rejoice in those Christians called "Baptists", who in years gone by, were not so called because they were insecure of being identified as "Christians" or "followers of the Lord Jesus Christ", but rather in dark hours of history when the visible church was teaching salvation by works and salvation through their denomination, and when they baptized or sprinkled infants and held to many other heresies, God sustained those who embraced the basic doctrines of our own statement of faith.

Because they held to the basic doctrines of grace and, therefore, "believer's baptism", they were ridiculed, persecuted, killed, and called by their enemies "Anabaptists" (those who baptized again). This was later shortened to "Baptist" while many others from this movement were later known as Mennonites, Brethren, etc. The term "Anabaptists" or Baptist" was an offensive epithet in order to convey the impression that they had founded a new sect or a cult. The point is this: After confessing that I am a Christian, it is also an honor, historically, to be called a Baptist. For to be so called is to suffer reproach for holding true to the Scriptures and our Savior. So may it ever be among the Christians at Southside Baptist Church. However,

to hold the title in pride or in the sense of denominationalism and in pre-eminence over being "just Christians" is not only against Scripture but is not baptistic!

[NOTE: We are no longer affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. See link to article on the front page of our website: www.southsidegallatin.org]

ARTICLE III --- ARTICLES OF FAITH

The ultimate authority in all matters of faith, order, and morals is and must be the Bible alone. However, it is good to attempt to set forth a summary of truth or doctrines which we believe and hold. Hopefully, such a summary will be of assistance in the confirmation of faith, an aid in building up The saints, and a guard against error. However, a Confession of Faith (or Articles of Faith) is not to be held as an infallible and authoritative rule. The Bible alone holds that position.

Section 1. THE SCRIPTURES:

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired; that it is truth without any admixture of error for its matter; that it is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; that it is our only infallible and authoritative rule of faith and practice; that it is the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried. Jesus Christ communicates with His church through the Scriptures as illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Any and all guidance in the Christian life that is from God must be in accordance with the written Word of God.

By the "Holy Bible" we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written, does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but IS the very WORD OF GOD. By "inspiration" we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or

ever will be inspired.

II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:19-20; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:15; Ps. 119:105, 130, 160; Luke 24:25-27; Luke 24:44-45; Ps.119:89; Prov. 30:5-6; Rom. 3:4; I Pet. 1:23; Rev. 22:19; Isa. 8:20; Eph. 6:17; Rom. 15:4; Luke 16:31; Ps. 19:7-11; John 5:39, 45-47; John 17:17

SECTION 2: THE TRUE GOD:

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

Ex. 20:2-3; Gen. 17:1; I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; John 4:24; Ps. 147:5; 83:18; 90:2; Jer. 10:10; Ex. 15:11; Rev. 4:11; I Tim. 1:17; Rom 11:33; Mark 12:30; Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; I Cor. 12:4-6; I John 5:7; John 10:30; 17:5; I Cor. 2:10; Phil. 2:5-6; Eph. 2:18; II Cor. 13:14

SECTION 3. JESUS CHRIST:

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God; that He is eternally existent with the Father; that He was begotten of the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man; that as a man He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin; that as the perfect Lamb of God He was crucified as our substitute; that His shed blood is the only acceptable sacrifice and propitiation to God for our atonement; that He arose from the grave for our justification, lives in us in the Person of the Holy Spirit for our sanctification, is seated at the right hand of the Father as our Advocate, and is coming again for our glorification.

John 1:1; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18; John 1:14; Heb. 2:14; John 8:46; Heb. 4:15; Acts 20:28; I Pet. 2:24; I Pet. 1:18-19; Gal. 3:13; Rom. 3:25; I John 2:2; 4:10; I Cor. 15:4; Rom. 8:9-10; John 3:5-6

SECTION 4. THE HOLY SPIRIT:

We believe that the Holy Spirit is equal with God the Father and God

the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that He convicts of sin, and righteousness, and judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the divine agent in the new birth; that He regenerates, baptizes, indwells, and seals all who become the children of God through Jesus Christ our Lord; and that He empowers, guides, teaches, sanctifies, and fills true believers in Christ, who daily surrender to Him.

John 14:16-17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1:1-3; II Thess. 2:7; John 16:8-11; 15:26-27; Acts 5:26-27; Acts 5:30-32; Eph. 1:13:14; Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; John 16:13; Rom. 8:14-16; II Thess. 2:13; I Pet. 1:2; Rom. 8:26-27

SECTION 5. THE DEVIL:

We believe that Satan was once an angel named Lucifer, and enjoyed heavenly honors, but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels; that he is the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the god of this world. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religion, the lord of the antichrist, and the chief of all the powers of darkness, destined, however, to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire, a place prepared for him and his angels.

Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:14-17; Rev. 12:9; Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4; Eph. 2:2; John 14:30; I Thess. 3:5; Matt. 13:39; Luke 2:3-4; Rev.12:10; II Cor. 11:13-15; Mark 13:21-22; Rev.13:13-14; II Thess. 2:8-11; Rev. 19:11, 16, 20;12:7-9; 20:1-3, 10; Matt. 25:41

SECTION 6: CREATION:

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after his own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from

lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life were made directly, and that God's established law was that they should bring forth "after their kind".

Gen. 1:1; Ex. 20:11; Acts 4:24; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3; John 1:3; Rev. 10:6; Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:23-26; Jer. 10:12; Neh. 9:6; Gen. 1:26-27; 2:23-23; 2:21-23; 1:11,24

SECTION 7: THE FALL OF MAN:

We believe that man was created in the image of God; that by personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, the first man (Adam) became a sinful creature and the father of a fallen race, which is universally sinful in both nature and practice; and that unregenerate man is alienated from God by sin, abiding under the wrath of God, and having no means of justifying himself before Him.

Gen. 3:1-6, 24; Eph. 2:1,3; Rom. 1:32, 20, 28; Rom. 5:12, 19; Rom. 1:18; Gal. 3:22; 3:10-19; Ezek. 18:19-20

SECTION 8. THE ATONEMENT:

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of sovereign grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by appointment of the Father freely took upon himself our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven; that uniting in His wonderful Person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is every way qualified to be the supremely suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; Isa. 53:4-7; Rom. 3:25; I John 4:10; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21; John 10:18; Phil. 2:8; Gal. 1:4; I Pet. 2:24, 3:18; Isa. 53:11; Heb. 12:2; I Cor. 15:20; Isa. 53:12; Heb. 9:12-15; 7:25; I John 2:2

SECTION 9. THE NEW BIRTH:

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

[John 3:3](#); [II Cor. 5:17](#); [Luke 5:27](#); [I John 5:1](#); [John 3:6-7](#); [Acts 2:41](#); [II Pet. 1:4](#); [Rom. 6:23](#); [Eph. 2:1](#); [II Cor. 5:19](#); [Col. 2:13](#); [John 1:12-13](#); [Gal. 5:22](#); [Eph. 5:9](#)

SECTION 10. JUSTIFICATION:

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as are born again by the Holy Spirit is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on the principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but that solely through faith in the Redeemer's Blood, His righteousness is imputed to us. "Justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7) and confess Him as Lord (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the placing of our sins on Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26)." (Quote edited from The Master's College)

[Acts 13:39](#); [Isa. 53:1](#); [Zech. 13:1](#); [Isa. 53:11](#); [Titus 3:5-7](#); [Rom. 1:17](#);

Hab. 2:4; Rom. 4:1-8; Heb. 10:38; Rom. 8:1; 5:9; 5:1

SECTION 11. SANCTIFICATION:

We believe that justification is not genuine if there issues forth no sanctification. The New Testament proclaims "Christ Jesus, whom God made our...sanctification." "Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that he might sanctify her." "You were sanctified...in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Holiness, or sanctification, is here set forth as the gracious gift of God. The first aspect is relational and positional. In this sense, God sanctifies sinners once and for ever when He brings them to Himself, separating them from the world, delivering them from sin and Satan, and welcoming them into His fellowship. In this sense, therefore, the meaning of sanctification approximates to that of justification, adoption, and new birth. From this standpoint, sanctification is a once-for-all benefit which the Christian begins to enjoy upon his conversion, through faith in Christ and to which he can look back as a past event. It is in virtue of this event that the New Testament addresses him as a "saint" -- because he has been "sanctified in Christ Jesus" in the sense explained. The New Testament does not say that Christians must lead holy lives in order to become saints; instead, it tells Christians that, because they are saints, they must henceforth lead holy lives! This, then, is the first and fundamental aspect of God's gift of sanctification.

The second aspect of the gift is re-creative and progressive. In this sense, sanctification is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in the believer throughout his earthly life whereby he grows in grace and is changed more and more in mind and heart and life into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this sanctifying work, God calls for our cooperation, as He "works in us to will and to act according to His good purpose." He summons us to "mortify" our sins (put them to death) through the Spirit and to devote ourselves to the practice of the "good works" which the ethical parts of the New Testament prescribe in such detail. Certainly, holiness is by faith in Jesus -- all our strength for holiness must be drawn from Him by faith and prayer, for without Him we can do nothing. But equally holiness is by effort; for when we have knelt to acknowledge our weakness and ask

for help, we are then to stand on our feet and strive against sin, resist the devil, and fight the good fight of faith. Holiness is no more by faith without effort than it is by effort without faith. (Statement on sanctification edited from J. I. Packer.)

I Cor. 1:30; Eph 5:25; I Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:10; 2:11;- 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12; Acts 26:18; I Cor. 1:2; I Pet. 2:2; II Pet. 3:18; Eph. 4:14; II Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10; Phil. 2:13; Rom. 8:13; John 15:5; Heb. 12:4; James 4:7; I Tim. 6:12; Eph. 6:10-18; Rom. 12:2

SECTION 12. REPENTANCE AND FAITH:

We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the only way of true life in Christ we turn away from our sin to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our ONLY and ALL SUFFICIENT SAVIOUR.

Titus 3:5; Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; Luke 18:13; Rom. 10:13; Ps. 51:1-4, 7; Isa. 55:6-7; Luke 12:8; Rom. 10:9-11; Acts 4:12

SECTION 13. THE LOCAL CHURCH:

We believe in the importance of the local church; that a New Testament church is a local assembly of baptized believers, gathered together by the Holy Spirit, assembled only in the name of Jesus; that the purposes of assembling are to worship God, to observe fellowship, the teaching of the Word, and to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord; that the New Testament officers of a local church are the elders or bishops; that the local church has the absolute right of self government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the

faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of discipline, of benevolence, and that the will of the local church (ruled by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit) is final.

Acts 2:41-42; I Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:11; I Cor. 12:4; 8-11; Acts 14:23; Acts 6:5-68; Acts 15:23; 20:17-28; I Tim. 3:1-13; Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23-24; Acts 15:22; Jude 3:4; II Cor. 8:23-24; I Cor. 16:1; Mal. 3:10; I Cor. 16:2 6:1-3; 5:11-13

SECTION 14. CHURCH ORDINANCES:

We believe that there are two ordinances given by our Lord: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that the ordinance of baptism is a picture and symbol of that Spiritual baptism whereby the new believer is baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit; that it is the immersion in water of the believer into the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; that a willingness to submit to the ordinance of baptism is prerequisite to the privileges of local church membership, including participating in the Lord's Supper. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and the cup (which is symbolic of the Savior's broken body and shed blood) by the assembled believers as a continuing memorial until He comes again; that it should be observed often and regularly; and that it is preceded always by solemn self examination.

Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:6; John 3:23; Rom. 6:4-5; Matt. 3:16; 28:19; Rom. 6:3-5; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12; Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 28:19-20; I Cor. 11:23-28

SECTION 15. THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER:

We believe that the believer is kept in eternal life by the power and grace of God and not by his own merit; that such only are true believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors.

John 8:31-32; Col. 1:21-23; I John 2:19; Matt. 13:19-21; Rom. 8:28; 36-39; Ps. 121:3; Heb. 1:14; I Pet. 1:5; Phil. 1:6; John 10:28

SECTION 16. THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED:

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; that all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse, that this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting blessing of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost: the saved to a life of eternal glory and bliss in heaven with God; the unsaved to eternal judgment of conscious suffering and woe in the lake of fire.

Mal. 3:18; Gen. 18:23; Rom. 6:17-18; Prov. 11:31; I Pet. 1:18; Rom. 1:17; I Cor. 15:22; Acts 10:32-35; I John 2:29; Rom. 6:16; I John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 7:6, 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34, 41; John 8:21; Luke 9:26; John 12:25; Matt. 7:13-14

SECTION 17. THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT:

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the written will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the Kings of the earth.

Rom. 13:7; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 10:28; Titus 3:1; I Pet. 2:13-14, 17; Acts 4:19-20; Dan. 3:17:18; Matt. 23:10; Phil 2:10-11; Matt. 23:21

SECTION 18. THE RESURRECTION AND RETURN OF CHRIST:

We believe that Christ rose bodily "the third day according to the scriptures; that He alone is our only "merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God"; "that this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" -- both bodily, personally, and visibly; that "the dead in Christ shall rise first"; that the living saints "shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump"; that "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father

David"; and "Bless and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years"; and after that for all eternity the saints of God in Christ will serve the Lamb of God, SEE HIS FACE; and reign forever and ever.

Matt. 28:6-7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; I Cor. 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-7; Heb. 2:17; 5:9-10; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Rev. 3:21; Heb. 8:1; 12:2; 8:6; I Tim. 2:5; I John 2:1; Phil. 3:20-21; John 14:3; I Thess. 4:16; Matt. 24:27, 42; Heb. 9:28; I Cor. 15:42-44; 51-53; Is. 11:4-5; I Thess. 4:17; Luke 1:32; I Cor. 15:25; Ps. 72:8; Rev. 20:1-4, 6; Rev. 22:1-5

SECTION 19. THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE:

We believe in victorious Christian living through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; that the Christian can, should and is commanded to experience a Spirit-filled life by: (1) desiring to be a Spirit-filled Christian, (2) confessing and forsaking all sins, (3) reckoning oneself to be dead unto sin and alive unto God through the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, (4) yielding oneself unconditionally to Christ as Lord of his life, (5) receiving the fullness of the Spirit by faith, (6) abiding in Christ for the continued manifestation of the Holy Spirit. (7) not grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit but rather letting the Word of Christ richly dwell within.

Eph. 5:18-33; Col. 3:16-23; John 1:9; Prov. 28:13; Psa. 38:18; Rom. 6:11-13; Luke 11:13; John 15:11

SECTION 20: THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

We believe that the Holy Spirit gives, as He wills, gifts to every member of the Body of Christ. These gifts are sovereign gifts. No one has all the gifts; nor is there any Scriptural evidence that all Christians will have or should seek any one particular gift. No gift signifies that a believer is spiritually minded or filled with the Holy Spirit. Gifts are given by God for the edification (building up) of the church.

The fundamental need in the church is to obey the command to be being continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. The manifestation of

Holy Spirit fullness will always be Christ-likeness and/or the nine fold fruit of the Holy Spirit -- "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Only as we are being filled with the Holy Spirit will we be able to recognize and edifyingly use the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Cor. 12:11, 28; Eph. 4:11-16; I Cor. 13:8-10; I Peter 3:16-21; Gal. 5:22-23

SECTION 21. THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS:

We believe in the priesthood of all believers; that Christ is our mighty High Priest, through whom every born again person has direct access into the presence of God without the need of a human priest; that the believer has the right and responsibility to personally study and interpret the Scriptures, guided by the Holy Spirit; and that every Christian has a service or ministry to perform.

Heb. 4:14-16; II Tim. 2:15; II Tim. 3:16-17; I John 2:20, 27; Eph. 4:7-8, 11-16

SECTION 22. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY:

We believe that God alone is the Lord of the conscience; that He has made us free from the doctrines and commandments of men; (which are in any respect in opposition to God's Word); that to believe such doctrines, or obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; that the requiring of an implicit faith, and absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy true liberty of conscience; that they who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, practice any sin, or cherish any sinful lust, thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction, and wholly destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.

James 4:12; Rom. 14:4; Acts 4:19,29; I Cor. 7:23; Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:20, 22, 23; I Cor. 3:5; II Cor. 1:24; Rom. 6:1-2; Gal. 5:13; II Pet.

2:18, 21

SECTION 23. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS:

We believe that it is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Gen. 12: 1-3; Ex. 19:5-6; Isa. 6:1-8; Matt. 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30
37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-8; 24:46-53; John
14:11-12; 15:7-8, 16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48;
Acts 13:2-3; Rom. 10:13-15; Eph. 3:1-11; I Thess. 1:8; II Tim. 4:5;
Heb. 2:1-3; 11:39 to 12:2; I Peter 2:4-10; Rev. 22:17

ARTICLE IV --- MEMBERSHIP

The Bible teaches that all believers are united at the moment of spiritual birth by baptism in the Spirit into the body of Christ, the Church (I Cor. 12:12-13). This universal body is manifested in the world by local assemblies where believers are characterized as "members one of another" (Rom. 12:5), and where each is to be developing in a process of spiritual growth until all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 4:13; I Cor. 1:10).

In order for this development to occur, a knowledgeable commitment to one another is necessary. This commitment begins with acceptance of the Bible as our common basis of authority for life. It requires agreement as to the nature, purpose, and government of a local New Testament church to the extent they are understood (see

Articles of Faith).

SECTION 1. REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP:

Any person who professes repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, who manifests a life transformed by the power of Christ, who has been baptized by immersion upon the profession of his faith, who expresses substantial agreement with the doctrines and aims of this church, and who is willing to submit to its government shall be eligible for membership in it.

SECTION 2. PROCEDURES IN THE RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

Paragraph A. A person who desires to become a member of the church may speak to the elders and request to be interviewed by them. During the interview the elders will seek to determine whether that person has a creditable profession of faith in Christ, has been scripturally baptized, is in substantial agreement with the doctrines of the church, and intends to give wholehearted support to its ministry and submit to its discipline.

Paragraph B. If the person is or has been a member of another church, special effort will be made to determine the person's standing in that church and his/her reasons for leaving. At the discretion of the elders, a letter of inquiry concerning the person's standing may be sent to that church before his acceptance as a member in this church is determined.

Paragraph C. If the elders are satisfied that the person meets the requirements for membership, they shall announce the same to the congregation at a stated meeting of the church. The elders may postpone the reception of a person into membership until proper investigation can be made concerning objections which in their judgment are sufficiently serious.

SECTION 3. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP:

Paragraph A. By physical death. When a member of the church is removed from our midst by death, his name shall automatically be

removed from the membership roll.

Paragraph B. By transfer. When it is so requested, the elders may grant to a departing member in good standing a letter of dismissal to the fellowship of another church. No such letter may be given to a member who is at the time under the corrective discipline of this church. The elders may refuse to grant a letter of transfer to any church which is in their judgment disloyal to "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" ([Jude 3](#)) or which does not exercise godly care over its members.

Paragraph C. By exclusions. If a member habitually absents himself from the stated meetings of the church without showing just cause, or if due to relocation he ceases to maintain a vital contact with the church, he may be removed from the membership at the discretion of the elders. Also, any member who personally so requests may after due admonition be removed from the membership. In such cases no congregational approval of the action shall be needed; the elders shall simply announce to the person, or persons, and to the congregation that such a person is no longer a member.

If a removed member applies again for membership, the procedures set forth in section 2 of this Article will again be followed.

Paragraph D By disfellowship. According to the teaching of Holy Scripture a congregation must cut off from its fellowship and visible membership any person who teaches or insists on holding false and heretical doctrine, who blatantly and persistently conducts himself in a manner inconsistent with his Christian profession or who persists in disturbing the unity or peace of the church ([Matt. 18:15 ff](#); [I Cor. 5:1 ff](#)). The procedure to be followed in such an act of disfellowship is set forth in Section 2 of Article V of this Constitution.

SECTION 4. CONDUCT EXPECTED OF MEMBERS.

Paragraph A. All members are expected to attend all the stated meetings of the church unless providentially hindered (by illness, accident, unusual working conditions, and other such circumstances). The stated meetings of the church are all the services on the Lord's Day (the Sunday School, morning and early afternoon worship, and

the Lord's Supper), the midweek prayer service, and any special meetings which the elders shall occasionally deem it necessary to call.

Paragraph B. The church expects its members to make use of the various other means of grace which are available to them, such as the regular daily reading of the Bible, regular private and family prayer, and a proper reverence for and observance of the Lord's Day.

Paragraph C. Since it is clearly taught in Scripture that Christians should support financially the work of the Lord by systematic and proportionate giving made through the local church ([Mal. 3:8-10](#); [I Cor. 16:1-2](#); [II Cor. 8-9](#)), all the members of this church are expected to conform to this rule of Scripture. The tithe (10% of one's income) is not imposed on the people of God as a tax but is strongly urged upon each member as an expression of worship and the biblical norm for basic giving, to which should be added gifts and offerings according to one's ability and the willingness of his heart ([II Cor. 8:1-5](#); [Ex. 36:2-7](#)).

Paragraph D. The church expects its members to obey the teachings of the scriptures in respect to family life and government. As the God-appointed head of the family, the husband must lead the household with gentleness and love but also with wisdom ([Eph. 5:25 ff](#); [I Tim. 3:4-5](#)). The wife must be in submission to her husband in all things according to the rule of Scripture ([Eph. 5:22-24](#); [I Pet. 3:1](#)). The husband with the wife must "nurture their children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" ([Eph. 6:2](#)), by setting a godly example before them, by instructing them consistently in the Scriptures, and by wise and firm discipline, including corporal discipline when it is needed ([Prov. 13:24](#); [22:15](#); [29:15](#); [Hebrews 12:7](#)).

Paragraph E. In as much as the church is represented in scripture as a body having many members, each of the members having its particular function and yet having a concern for the health and protection of the whole ([I Cor. 12:12-27](#); [Eph. 4:4, 11-16](#)), this church expects that each of its members will strive for the good of the entire body. The members must actively seek to cultivate acquaintance with one another so that they may be better able to pray for, love,

comfort, encourage, and help one another materially as necessity may require. They must refrain from speaking ill of one another and must keep in strict confidence all matters of private concern to the church, not discussing them with persons outside of this fellowship.

Paragraph F. It is the duty of every Christian, individually and as a member of a local church, to labor for the extension of the kingdom of God both at home and to the ends of the earth. Therefore, every member of this church is expected prayerfully to recognize and to seize every opportunity to bear witness to his faith in Christ both by consistent Christian conduct and by the testimony of his lips.

Paragraph G. Each member of the church is expected to render in his daily life loyal obedience to all the moral precepts established in the Word of God ([Rom. 8:3-4](#)). If God has not condemned or forbidden a practice in His Word, a Christian is at liberty to participate in it. The exercise of Christian liberty, however, must at all times be governed by an earnest desire to walk in the fear of God and to glorify Him in all things ([I Peter 1:17](#); [I Cor. 10:31](#)), a loving regard for the consciences of weaker brethren ([I Cor. 8:9](#); [Rom. 15:1-3](#)), a compassion for the lost ([I Cor. 9:19-22](#)), and a zealous regard for the health of one's own soul ([Rom. 13:14](#); [I Pet. 2:16](#)).

Paragraph H. All who come into the membership of this church are expected to recognize and submit to the authority of the overseers of the church ([I Cor. 16:15-16](#); [I Thess. 5:12-13](#); [Heb. 13:17](#))

SECTION 5. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

Paragraph A. **We believe** that the home and the church are the only two God ordained institutions which have been given life-training responsibilities. Therefore, we believe the Christian home and the church should labor together for the total education (life training) of each church member's children. This includes training on Sunday and on weekdays. Christian education is defined as all teaching and training activities including Sunday School, K-12 Monday-Friday school, music, home meetings or any other such activities which we

may have from time to time.

Paragraph B. Church participation: We believe that every child should receive an education which is Christian. Therefore, it is expected that the members of our church will give their children a Christian education.

Paragraph C. Teaching: All teaching in all the facets of the church educational ministry is to be done in conformity with our statement of faith.

Paragraph D. Lifestyle: It is required of all people involved in the ministry of education to live a style of life consistent with our statement of faith because of the learning which children do by observation.

Paragraph E. Staff membership: School staff is church staff because the school is church. They are subject to the same conditions, terms, obligations and responsibilities as all other church staff.

Paragraph F. Course conformity: Every subject taught in the church educational ministry is to be taught in conformity with the Word of God. The Bible is a text for every subject and every subject is taught in conformity with it.

Paragraph G. Outreach: Because the Bible cannot be understood apart from salvation, outreach is a function of the church educational ministry, namely, that each child come to know Christ personally.

Paragraph H. Academic excellence: The academic aspect of the church educational ministry is dedicated to academic excellence because it is commanded Biblically ([Col. 3:23-24](#)).

Paragraph I. Anti-theistic thought: The church educational ministry is to teach that the following are lies, errors and pagan falsehoods: (1) deism and (2) humanism, both secular and "Christian".

Paragraph J. Priesthood of believers: (See Section 21 & 22 of Articles of Faith.) As relating to Christian education, each family is responsible before God to make personal family decisions as to the

education of their children.

ARTICLE V --- CHURCH DISCIPLINE

SECTION 1. FORMATIVE DISCIPLINE:

Every disciple (follower) of Christ must be under His discipline (His instruction and correction), which is administered to each one through the church, according to [I Cor. 12:12-27](#) and other passages. Submission to one another and to the overseers whom the Lord has set over His church ([Eph. 5:21](#); [I Pet. 5:5](#)) will result in the sanctification of each member individually and of the whole body of the church collectively. There are occasions, however, when failure in the application of this formative discipline makes the application of corrective discipline necessary.

SECTION 2. CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE:

Paragraph A. General statement.

Corrective discipline becomes necessary when heretical doctrine or disorderly or scandalous conduct appears among the members of the church. In all such cases reasonable efforts must be made to resolve difficulty, correct error, and remove offense through counsel and admonition before more drastic steps are taken ([Gal. 6:1](#); [James 5:19-20](#)). The principles given to us in [Matt. 18:15-16](#) and [I Cor. 5:1-13](#) must be carefully followed in all cases of corrective discipline. When admonition is not heeded, suspension of some of the privileges of membership may need to be imposed, and if this measure fails, disfellowship from the membership of the church may be necessary.

Paragraph B. Suspension.

(1) Any conduct on the part of a member which disturbs the peace of the church or prejudices its testimony may require that the offending brother or sister be debarred by action of the elders from participating in certain activities of the church according to the gravity of the offense. A suspension shall be announced to the

congregation by the elders and shall remain in force until the suspended member gives evidence of true repentance and change of conduct. When a suspended member can be restored to full fellowship, this also shall be announced to the congregation by the elders. While a member is under such discipline, he shall be treated by the congregation according to the directions given in [II Thess. 3:6-15](#). Although such a person is considered to be walking disorderly, he must still be regarded as a member and not as one cut off from the church.

(2) If a member has sinned publicly but shows hopeful signs of repentance, including submission to the admonition of the elders, it may still be necessary to suspend him for a time from some of the privileges of membership lest reproach be brought upon the church, lest others be emboldened to sin, and lest the offender himself fail to test his own soul and realize the gravity of his offense. Those who humbly submit to the imposed discipline shall afterward be wholly forgiven and publicly received back into the full fellowship of the church.

(3) In the case where a person is accused or suspected of gross sin and absents himself from the congregation, refusing to meet with the elders that the matter may be investigated, the elders shall announce to the congregation that that person is suspended from membership, and such suspension shall continue in force as long as the conditions giving rise to it continue.

Paragraph C. Disfellowship.

(1) Some types of conduct must be categorized as "immoral" ([I Cor. 5:9-11; 6:9-10](#)), and a member guilty of such conduct must be cut off from the fellowship of the church ([I Cor. 5:3-5; Matt. 18:17](#)). In such a case the elders shall make earnest efforts to bring the offender to true repentance and reformation, but if these efforts fail, they shall report the same to the congregation at a specially called business meeting of the church and recommend that the offender be disfellowshipped. An act of disfellowship will proceed and be valid on those occasions when the Holy Spirit has given unity and peace in the congregation.

(2) Likewise, some wrong opinions regarding the doctrines of Scripture are so serious that they must be categorized as "heretical" ([Gal. 1:6-9](#); [I Tim. 4:1](#)), and a member who persists in propagating or holding any such opinion, in spite of earnest and patient admonition by the elders, shall be disfellowshipped in the same manner as an immoral person.

ARTICLE VI --- CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND OFFICE-BEARERS LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

SECTION 1. JESUS CHRIST: THE HEAD.

The head of the church is Christ ([Col. 1:18](#)). He is the true source of all the Church is and does, and His glory is to be the goal of every act and function and motive of the body both individually and collectively.

SECTION 2. THE BIBLE: OUR SOURCE.

Christ has provided His thoughts and His direction for the body in the Bible ([II Pet. 1:3](#)). It gives his commands, His counsel and His purposes for every believer ([II Tim. 3:16-17](#)). **___THE MIND OF CHRIST IS, THEREFORE, NOT DETERMINED BY VOTE OF THE CONGREGATION, ___nor by edit from the leadership, but is discovered by careful study and accurate interpretation of the Bible as the Holy Spirit illuminates the truth therein contained** ([John 14:26, 16:13](#)). The body is to conform to His Word thus carrying out His will to His purpose and to His glory. This is the body's whole reason for being.

SECTION 3. BIBLE AUTHORIZED OFFICERS:

The biblically authorized officers of the local church who administer order, discipline, and worship are the elders (overseers) ([Acts 20:17, 28](#); [Phil. 1:1](#); [I Tim. 3:1](#)). The biblical pattern and teaching calls for a plurality of elders, shepherding and ruling the local church together under the headship of Christ.

Paragraph A. The leadership responsibility of the elders is limited in scope to the local assembly, and there is no ecclesiastical appointment or calling that would position one elder over another. There may be the exercise of leadership for the purpose of orderly function, but this exercise of leadership is a matter of function and must be distinguished from positional authority. Various elders would provide leadership in the areas where they are gifted or where training and experience would enable them to function best ([I Cor. 3:1-9](#)).

Paragraph B. Leadership in the local assembly is not priestly in nature. Since each believer is a priest unto God, there is no need for a priestly office within the church ([I Pet. 2:9](#)). The terms clergy and laity lead to doctrinal inaccuracies and should be avoided ([I Tim. 2:5](#)).

Paragraph C. The appointment to leadership is by the Holy Spirit ([Acts 20:28](#)) as evidenced by a sincere desire to serve ([I Tim. 3:1](#)) and identified by the assembly as revealed standards for qualification are met ([I Tim. 3](#); [Titus 1](#)).

Paragraph D. The biblical terms "elder", "overseer", and "pastor" refer to the same person. ([Acts 20](#))

Paragraph E. The function of leadership involves:

(1) ruling the church. This is to be done by example ([I Pet. 5:2-3](#)) and incorporates giving direction by means of meaningful structure ([I Tim. 5:17](#); [3:4-5](#)).

(2) shepherding the church ([I Pet. 5:2](#)), (3) teaching the church ([II Tim. 2:2](#)), and

(4) representing the church ([Acts 20:17](#)).

Paragraph F. The church's duties to the elders are as follows:

(1) some elders, especially ministering elders, are to be cared for in a financial way by the church ([I Tim. 5:17-18](#); [I Cor. 9:4-14](#)),

(2) an elder is not to be rebuked, but entreated as a father ([I Tim.](#)

5:1),

(3) Christians should not receive an accusation against an elder except before two or three witnesses ([I Tim. 5:19](#)),-

(4) they should be remembered, recognized, and obeyed ([I Thess. 5:12-13](#); [Heb. 13:7, 17](#)).

God's Word promises a reward to faithful elders ([I Peter 5:1-4](#)).

SECTION 4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS:

The responsibility for management of the affairs of this local church shall rest upon the elders. Administrative tasks have been delegated to men who are appointed by God to teach and shepherd the flock of God ([Acts 20:22-28](#); [Eph. 4](#); [I Pet.5:1-5](#)). All functional (normal) decisions will be made by the elders after taking all possible steps to ascertain the will of God. This will include communication with the church, since individual members are expected to share needs and insights with the elders who in turn are responsible to consider this input. Unanimous elder vote is required in all matters except where there is personal involvement requiring that an elder not participate in a decision (i. e., salary, discipline). Decisions by the elders will be final unless such decisions can be demonstrated to be contrary to the revealed will of God. In all matters the needs of each part of the body will be given prayerful consideration.

SECTION 5. QUALIFICATION:

Elders shall be male members of this local church who have demonstrated their faith in Christ as Savior and who are characterized as being irreproachable (that is, one against whom no charge can be brought concerning the habit of his life). The potential elder's lifestyle will be evaluated according to the qualifications given in [I Timothy 3](#) and [Titus 1](#).

SECTION 6. SELECTION:

The elders have the responsibility to seek a man (men) to meet any deficiency of spiritual gifts among the elders. He (they) may be secured from within or outside the local assembly. When considering

potential elders, the church body will be asked to participate in prayer, fasting and evaluation. Biblical evaluation sheets will be given to church members to aid in this matter. Members are also encouraged to give recommendations to the elders. The purpose is not to elect men to leadership but to identify those men whom God would appoint. The men who are made known will be evaluated by the elders on the basis of the evaluation sheets and personal interviews. The elders will then announce to the church those being considered and there will be sufficient time allowed for anyone to present to the elders any reason (s) why a particular candidate is not qualified.

SECTION 7. TERM OF SERVICE:

The elders shall be appointed for an indefinite term, subject to periodic review. Termination for any reason other than morals or doctrine will be by mutual agreement concerning the will of God. Any elder may be disciplined according to biblical principles ([I Tim. 5:19-22](#)). Any elder may request temporary or permanent relief from duties if for any reason he feels he is unable to serve.

SECTION 8. OPERATION OF THE CHURCH:

The form of government is theocratic (God ruled) in nature. The will of God is expressed through the Word of God. Thus, the local church is not a political democracy, but a theocracy. If there are divisions within the congregation, it means that some or all are not being led by the Holy Spirit. For example, the scripture may be ignored, wrongly interpreted, or misapplied. Specific responsibilities for the functioning of the church are laid upon the entire membership. For example, the First Corinthian epistle deals with many problems of church function and it is addressed to the entire local church and every member in it ([I Cor. 1:1-2](#)). However, the elders have the primary responsibility for leadership in ascertaining the will of the Lord ([I Pet. 5:1-5](#)). Believing that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and that His will is determined by prayer and careful, accurate interpretation of the Bible, which is the sole authority for faith and life, we purpose in all matters to ask, "What is the will of our Lord concerning this decision?"

SECTION 9. DEACONS:

The word "deacon" means servant, a man who pursues some ministry or service. The church will have as many deacons as the Holy Spirit directs. These will be appointed by the elders, all having been led by the Holy Spirit and after consultation with the church. They shall be ordained by the elders and fellow deacons. They shall be appointed by the elders over the business of the church, in order that the elders may be free to give themselves to prayer and ministry of the Word.

Paragraph A. Duties: The deacons will serve under the direction of and be directly responsible to the elders. Should there ever be a time when the church has no elders, the deacons shall be responsible to temporarily assume the responsibility of the elders in assisting the congregation in carrying out SECTION 6 of ARTICLE VI; in THE SELECTION OF ELDERS.

Paragraph B. Selection: The difference between the deacon and the elder is related to gifting and appointment by God at a given time in the life of an individual. Deacons shall be male members of this local church who have demonstrated their faith in Christ as Savior. The potential deacon will be evaluated as to his lifestyle according to the qualifications given in [I Tim. 3](#).

Paragraph C. Term of Service: The deacons shall be appointed for an indefinite term, subject to periodic review by the elders. Termination for any reason other than morals or doctrine will be by mutual agreement concerning the will of God. Any deacon may request temporary or permanent relief from duties if for any reason he feels he is unable to serve.

SECTION 10. PERSONNEL:

The elders, in consultation with the church, shall appoint any personnel deemed necessary for the administration of the church's work; such as a treasurer, a clerk, musicians, ushers, finance committee, building committee, and teachers. An appropriate job description is to be provided for all personnel.

SECTION 11. SUMMARY:

In its government the local church is independent of outside earthly ruler-ship, whether religious or secular. It is the sole and highest earthly authority, self-supporting and self-propagating. There are no offices in the New Testament that are given authority over the local church which are outside or beyond the local church. ([Acts 15](#); [Phil. 1:1](#)).

ARTICLE VII --- CHURCH MEETINGS

SECTION 1. WORSHIP:-

(1) Congregational services shall be held statedly on Sunday and Wednesday and any other day of the week deemed necessary.

(2)The ordinance of the Lord's Supper will be observed at least once a month. (3)Special meetings may be appointed by the elders.

SECTION 2. BUSINESS:

There shall be no specified time for monthly business meetings, but such meetings shall be called by the elders, as needed. Financial reports will be given monthly. The church will gather annually to report the previous year's progress, and outline plans for the coming year. When the elders, being led by the Holy Spirit, are in one accord, they shall present major business matters to the church body and carry them out with the support and unity of the congregation. The elders shall be careful to keep the congregation informed of all business in progress. The elders will work with and draw counsel from the deacons, Sunday school leader-ship etc. **In all matters of business our desire is not majority rule, minority rule, elder rule or any such thing - rather the rule of the Holy Spirit. Therefore prayer and the Holy Scriptures are vital to all church business.**

ARTICLE VIII --- AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by the elders when in one accord they believe an amendment is to the glory of God and the good of the church. Any amendment shall be proceeded (thirty days in advance) by a written notice in order for the church body to have ample time to pray, fast, and ask questions concerning the amendment. The amendment shall be valid when the Holy Spirit has given unity and peace in the congregation.

APPENDIX A. UNITY AND PEACE IN ALL CHURCH DECISION MAKING:

Unity and peace are defined as those occasions when the elders confirm that at least two-thirds of the congregation present is in agreement.

MORALITY ISSUES APPENDIX: (Formally approved by the church on 9/23/18)

MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY:

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. **We believe** that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). **We believe** that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that all forms of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual and lesbian behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and/or use of pornography) are sinful, offensive to God, and a perversion of God's gift of sex. **We believe** that God disapproves of

and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery (Genesis 1:26-28). (Gen. 26:8-10; Heb. 13:4; Lev. 18:1-30; Matt. 15:18-20; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:9-10; 1 Thess. 4:1-8)

We believe that, in order to preserve the function and integrity of Southside Baptist Church (SBC) as the local Body of Christ and to provide a biblical role model to the SBC members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by SBC in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, or who are members agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). 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 SBC (Ephesians 4:29-32).

THEREFORE, IN LIGHT OF ALL THE ABOVE:

The only weddings which can be performed in the buildings or on the property of Southside Baptist Church are marriages between a Bible-believing Christian man and a Bible-believing Christian woman who are SO BIOLOGICALLY DESIGNED BY GOD at their birth; and who are MEMBERS in good standing at Southside Baptist Church.

MOREOVER, no Southside Baptist Pastor/Elder, either on the SBC property or off the SBC property is allowed to conduct marriages outside the Biblical boundaries of the above statements; nor are they permitted to conduct 'civil ceremonies; but only Biblically based 'covenant ceremonies which bless the union between one Christian man and one Christian woman as biologically defined by their natural birth.

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FURTHERMORE, Southside Baptist Church does not 'rent out' any portion or all of the SBC facilities to any outside group or individuals for any reason. IF THERE ever becomes a need or desire to make an exception, such church or group would have to be of like-minded faith, and would have to fully embrace our Biblical positions on Marriage and Family; and the SBC church leadership and families would have to approve any such exception.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS:

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (Pastors and elders) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church (Gal. 3:28; Col 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12).

We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural servant-leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline.

Since both the Christian Home and the Christian church are BOTH God-ordained institutions, they should complement and help each other in the Christian Education of SBC children (Gen 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

ABORTION:

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We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion is a procedure with the sole purpose of killing the unborn in the termination of pregnancy. We oppose abortion. When extreme medical emergencies arise that threaten the life of the mother, we believe in treatment to save the mother's life, including premature delivery if that is indicated, obviously with the patient's informed consent. This is not abortion to save the mother's life. The purpose is to treat two patients — the mother and the baby — and every reasonable attempt to save the baby's life would also be part of medical intervention.

We acknowledge that, in some instances, the baby would be too premature to survive (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

EUTHANASIA: We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus, we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment (Ex. 20:13, 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28).