

**Bethlehem Baptist Church**

# **CONSTITUTION**

**And Bylaws**

**Revised 2007**



**2007**

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

***Table of Contents***

**Church Constitution**

➤ Preamble	4
➤ Name	4
➤ Purpose Statement	4
➤ Articles of Faith	4
➤ Character	4
➤ Church Covenant	5
➤ Amendment	6
➤ Revision	6

**Church Bylaws**

<b><i>Chapter I - Church Membership</i></b>	7
➤ Section 1 (Membership General Qualifications)	7
➤ Section 2 (Membership Termination)	8
➤ Section 3 (Membership Relocation)	8
➤ Section 4 (Membership)	8
➤ Section 5 (New Membership)	8

***Chapter II - Meetings***

➤ Section 1 (Church Year)	9
➤ Section 2 (Business Meetings)	9

***Chapter III – Church Officers***

➤ Section 1 (Pastor)	10
➤ Section 2 (Ministerial Staff)	11
➤ Section 3 (Non-Ministerial Staff)	12
➤ Section 4 (Deacons)	12-13
➤ Section 5 (Moderator)	14
➤ Section 6 (Church Clerk)	14
➤ Section 7 (Church Treasurer)	15
➤ Section 8 (Trustees)	15

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

***Chapter IV – Church Organizations***

- Section 1 (General) 16
- Section 2 (Church Council) 16
- Section 3 (Sunday school) 16
- Section 4 (Discipleship Training) 16
- Section 5 (Music) 16
- Section 6 (Women on Mission) 16
- Section 7 (Brotherhood) 17
- Section 8 (Officers and Church Organizations) 17

***Chapter V – Committees***

- Section 1 (General) 17
- Section 2 (Nominating Committee) 18
- Section 3 (Pastor/Ministerial Staff Search Committee) 18
- Section 4 (Finance Committee) 19
- Section 5 (Personnel Committee) 19

***Chapter VI – Discipline*** 20

***Chapter VII – Financial Policies*** 21

Appendix 1 Consultant/Contact Position Process 22-23

Appendix 2 Committee on Committees 24

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

**Preamble**

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end, that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist Convention and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to the other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

**Name**

This body of believers shall be known as the "Bethlehem Baptist Church, 2506 State Highway 134 East, Headland, Alabama 36345."

***Purpose Statement***

*The purpose of Bethlehem Baptist Church is to be a star of light reflecting the gospel of Jesus Christ to a world hungry for the good news of salvation and to embrace believers in a meaningful church relationship that is inclusive of our community and others around the world.*

**Articles of Faith**

The "Baptist Faith and Message", as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, 2000, Orlando, FL., shall serve as the Articles of Faith.

**Character**

1. Policy

The government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation with the Judson Baptist Association, The Alabama Baptist State Convention and The Southern Baptist Convention which are common among Southern Baptist Churches.

2. Doctrine

Bethlehem Baptist Church receives the Bible as authority in matters of faith and practice. The understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of the Baptist Churches as indicated in the Articles of Faith herewith.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

**Church Covenant**

**This Church adopts the Baptist Church Covenant as follows:**

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

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to give it a place in our affections, prayers and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, toward its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word."

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

**Amendment**

This constitution may be amended at any regular or special business meeting of the church by a **3/4** majority vote provided the amendment has been presented in writing at a previous regular or special business meeting held at least 28 days prior to the vote. The date that the amendment is adopted shall be noted in the lower right hand corner of each page whose text is changed by the amendment or by incorporation of the amendment. A master copy of this constitution with consecutively numbered pages shall be filed in the church office.

**Revision**

This constitution shall be revised every five years. The year of this revision is 2007. The revised Constitution will be presented to the church for approval no later than December of the revision year. The church shall have one week to review the proposed constitution prior to a vote being taken. A special called business meeting will be held to answer questions and make any changes the church deems necessary to the proposed constitution the Sunday preceding the regular scheduled business meeting.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

**Bylaws**

**I. Church Membership**

**Section 1: Membership General Qualifications**

1. Qualifications for Membership

1.1. Membership by Baptism

1.1.1. Any person professing faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior and declaring his Purpose to follow Him as His disciple may, by unanimous consent of the Congregation at any Church meeting, be received through baptism into full Membership of this Church.

1.1.2. For persons who have experienced salvation but have not experienced believers' Baptism by immersion.

1.2. Membership by Letter

1.2.1. Members of other Baptist Churches of like doctrine who have been immersed (Baptized) according to the New Testament may by unanimous consent of the Congregation at any Church meeting, be received into full membership of this Church upon receipt of letters of termination from those Churches.

1.3. Membership by Statement

1.3.1. Any person who has been baptized according to the New Testament (but whose Membership has lapsed or been lost) may, upon statement of the facts and vow of Their faith and love in Christ, be received into membership of this Church by unanimous consent of the congregation during worship service.

1.4. Watch-Care Membership

1.4.1 The purpose of Watch-Care Membership is to allow the individuals to remain a member of their home church for \*justifiable reasons, yet be included in the fellowship of believers through the Watch-Care Membership of Bethlehem Baptist Church. Such persons would be able to:

- Use the church facilities for personal events, such as birthdays, anniversaries, and family reunions at no charge.
- Use the sanctuary for weddings or funerals at no charge.

1.4.2 The limitations of WCM will be:

- WCM may not vote during church business meetings. All voting is reserved for those who have placed their church membership with the BBC.
- If requested, no special privileges will be granted to the WCM to be buried in the BBC cemetery. The charge will be the same as non-members.

\* Justifiable reasons are to be shared with the pastor and the Chairman of Deacons. There are many reasons why persons may request WCM. Some of these reasons might be:

- A college student who needs a church home away from home.
- An older adult on short term work assignment who wants a church home during a transit period.
- A person who plans to be buried in their home church cemetery and the church requires any such person to be a member of that church. Therefore, a WCM opens the door for that person to have a church home away from home.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

- 1.4.3 If the pastor and Chairman of Deacons believe the request of a person to become a WCM meets a justifiable reason, then based on the person's request for WCM, the pastor will share that request with the church body, just as in presenting a person for membership to the church family. A vote will be taken to allow the congregation to affirm the person into the WCM of BBC.

**Section 2: Membership Termination**

2. Termination of Membership
  - 2.1. Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:
    - 2.1.1. Death
    - 2.1.2. Transfer of letter to another Southern Baptist Church
    - 2.1.3. Proof of membership in a Church of another denomination
    - 2.1.4. Exclusion by action of this Church.
    - 2.1.5. Erasure upon written request.

**Section 3: Membership Relocation**

3. Relocation of Membership
  - 3.1. When any member moves, he should follow the teachings of the Church Covenant.

**Section 4: Membership**

4. Members
  - 4.1. Member being defined as one who is involved in church activities and one who attends Church Services on a regular basis.
  - 4.2. Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, there will be no absentee balloting according to the policies of this church.
  - 4.3. The moderator will request that members voluntarily abide by the rule that all members 15 years and younger must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to vote.
  - 4.4. Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church according to the policies of this church.
  - 4.5. Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church according to the policies of this church.
  - 4.6. When a member shall fail to manifest any interest in the Church for a period of six months, the deacons and church leaders shall make every effort to resolve any conflict, to offer encouragement through various outreach ministries, and faithfully pray for such members to be reconciled to the family of faith.

**Section 5: New Members**

5. New Members
  - 5.1. New members of this church are expected to participate in the church's new member orientation according to the policies of this church.
  - 5.2. A new members' packet is to be mailed the week following membership by the church secretary.
  - 5.3. The new members' packet will include church directory, church constitution and any other information that would help acquaint new church families to the church fellowship.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

## **II. Meetings**

### **Section 1: Church Year**

#### **1. Church Year**

- 1.1 The Church year shall run from September 1 through August 31 of each year to comply with Southern Baptist Convention guide lines adopted in 1996.

### **Section 2: Business Meetings**

#### **2. Business Meetings**

- 2.1 Regular business meetings of the Church shall be held quarterly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday night in the first month of each quarter.
- 2.2 The business meeting held in September shall be the Annual Business Meeting of the Church to comply with Southern Baptist Convention guide lines adopted in 1996.
- 2.3 Church financial records will be balanced and budget reports compiled monthly. A financial report will be made to the deacons each month for overview. Once approved by the deacons the monthly financial report will be made available to church members monthly.
- 2.4 Monetary decisions involving amounts > \$500.00 that are not included in the church budget, as well as the annual budget shall be voted on in a special called business meeting during a Sunday morning worship service.
- 2.5 The pastor may call business meetings as they are required for routine church business. If it is other than routine church business notice shall be given publicly one week prior to the special called business meeting through the church bulletin, from the pulpit, or at any regular service preceding the meeting.
- 2.6 The moderator shall be the pastor. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of deacons shall preside; in the absence of those two, the meeting shall be postponed until such a time that the Pastor or Chairman of deacons can preside.
- 2.7 The government of the church shall be vested in the hands of the members. A majority vote of those present and voting shall be effective to bind the Church, except in the calling of a pastor or other staff ministers, or changing of by-laws, at which time a 3/4 majority vote of those present and voting shall be necessary.
- 2.8 Any church member shall be entitled to vote in church business meetings, each member being entitled to one vote. Any church member may make motions or discuss motions upon recognition by the moderator.
- 2.9 Robert's Rules of Order shall govern in all parliamentary matters.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

### **III Church Officers**

#### **Section 1: Pastor**

1. The pastor shall have in charge the welfare and oversight of the Church. He shall preside at all meetings of the church except as herein provided. He shall take vacation, revivals and other days off and/or away from the church field in keeping with the stipulations of the call as voted upon by this Church prior to his assuming his post as pastor. The pastor is responsible to the church for leading the church to determine its mission and to move toward attaining it. He is to proclaim the gospel and provide pastoral care for persons in the church and in the community. He serves as an enabler to involve church members in the work of the church so that its divine mission can be achieved.

His responsibilities are:

- 1.1. Proclaim the gospel and lead church members in the proclamation of the gospel in the church and community.
- 1.2. Visit individuals in need of personal attention and to lead church members to do the same.
- 1.3. Provide leadership for congregational services and lead in conducting the church ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- 1.4. Provide Administrative leadership in guiding the church in the attainment of its divine mission.
- 1.5. Conduct wedding ceremonies and funeral services.
- 1.6. Work closely with the deacons, training them in the performance of their work of proclamation outreach to the un-reached, and in the caring and building of church fellowship.
- 1.7. Serve as chairman of the Church Council.
- 1.8. Supervise church staff members according to a plan of staff organization, and to provide for staff training and development.

Termination of a pastor's service may be any of the following:

- 1.9 Resignation.
- 1.10 Other conditions. Procedure:
  - 1.10.1 Charges brought against the pastor will be lodged with the deacons.
  - 1.10.2 The deacons will call the pastor into conference for the purpose of discussing the charges. In the event the charges are not substantiated they will be dropped.
  - 1.10.3 If in the opinion of the deacons the charges are substantiated, and by vote of the deacons, a recommendation to include the condition of termination will be made to the Church for declaring the pulpit vacant.
  - 1.10.4 The Church will be given notice of pending action by the chairman of deacons before a special business meeting for this purpose.
  - 1.10.5 The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the voting members present being necessary to declare the office vacant.
  - 1.10.6 Upon the dismissal of a pastor, the chairman of deacons shall act as chief administrative officer of the church.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

Interim Pastor Selection:

- 1.11 The Chairman of deacons shall appoint an interim pastor selection committee from the active deacons to secure the services of an interim pastor.

Pastor Selection:

- 1.12 The church without undue delay shall elect a pastor search committee by ballot, from the church at large, to seek out a new pastor. (Reference: Chapter V, Committees, Section 3)
  - 1.12.1 The pastor search committee, with the recommendation of the deacons, shall present only one name at a time for church action at a special called business meeting in conjunction with regular Sunday morning worship service.
  - 1.12.2 The pastor will be called for an indefinite time upon a vote by ballot of three-fourths of the members present and voting.
  - 1.12.3 The responsibilities of the Pastor, along with the stipulation of the call (job description, vacation, time away from the church field, etc.) shall be voted upon by the church in business meeting.

**Section 2: Ministerial Staff**

2. The church may call a minister (or ministers) in the area of music, youth and education or in such areas as the church deems necessary.
  - 2.1. The church shall elect a ministerial staff search committee in the same manner as a pastor search committee. (Reference: Chapter V, Committees, Section 3.)
  - 2.2. The Pastor and the elected search committee shall recommend a (each) specific position along with tentative responsibilities for church approval prior to the pursuit of a candidate by the search committee.
  - 2.3. The procedure to secure a ministerial staff member will be the same as that for a pastor.
  - 2.4. The responsibilities of the ministerial staff member, along with the stipulation of the call (job description, vacation, time away from the church field, etc.) shall be voted upon by the church in business meeting in the same manner as that for a pastor.
  - 2.5. Difficulties for ministerial staff, which cannot be resolved by the pastor and personnel committee shall be referred to the deacons to be resolved in the same manner as that as the pastor.

*Interim Ministerial Staff Committee Selection:*

- 2.6. Upon the dismissal or resignation of a ministerial staff position, the pastor with the consultation of the chairman of deacons shall appoint a committee from the church members to secure an interim minister to fill the vacancy until that same ministerial staff search committee can seek out a new minister to permanently fill the vacancy.

*Amended 07.09.2008  
Section 2*

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

**Section 3: Non-ministerial Staff**

- 3.1 Non-ministerial staff shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The personnel committee shall have the authority to employ and terminate services of all non-ministerial staff members. Any committee that recognizes the need for additional employment would make that recommendation to the Personnel Committee, who would act upon the recommendation. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the pastor and, as appropriate, with consultation of related committees of the church.
- 3.2 Consultant Ministry staff shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The pastor and deacons shall recommend the formation of a new ministry position based upon obvious needs of the church and community. (see appendix 1 for the process and guidelines for selecting the consultant minister)

**Section 4: Deacons**

Definition: A man of honest report, a good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit, full of wisdom and faith. The deacon should be a servant of this church and Jesus Christ our Lord. The office of a deacon is a place of service.

**4.1 Qualifications**

- 4.1.1 The deacon should live a consecrated Christian life, bringing no reproach by his conduct upon the church or the cause of Christ.
- 4.1.2 He should attend Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday nights, and all special Church meetings unless hindered by some reason which is approved by good conscience.
- 4.1.3 He should be the husband of one wife.
- 4.1.4 He should tithe.
- 4.1.5 He should be fully cooperative with the pastor and church.
- 4.1.6 He should be a man who refrains from destructive criticism of his pastor and church or its' leadership, willing to settle all difficulties in a quiet and Christian manner, without hurting the cause of Christ or His church.
- 4.1.7 He should be able to keep in confidence any issues the deacons deem private for the benefit of the church, yet deal with any such concerns with wisdom and legal advice if so required.
- 4.1.8 He should be active in the activities of the church.
- 4.1.9 He should be a man of whom people say: "He is a good Christian man."
- 4.1.10 He should measure up to the requirements given in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3: 8-15 and Acts 6: 3-5.
- 4.1.11 He shall be a proven member for 12 months.
- 4.1.12 When a deacon is ordained as a Minister of the Gospel the first ordination of deacon is over-ridden by the second ordination.
- 4.1.13 No paid personnel will serve on the body of deacons.

**4.2 Duties**

- 4.2.1 The deacon shall support and assist the pastor and staff in total ministry.
- 4.2.2 Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
- 4.2.3 Care for church members and other persons in the community.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

- 4.2.4 Help to lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry and application.
- 4.2.5 Lead the church in performing ministry.

4.3 Number of Deacons

- 4.3.1 There will be ten active deacons serving on a rotation system; however the number of deacons may vary according to the needs of the church. This number may be changed based on the recommendation of the deacons to the church at any Church Business Meeting provided the church has been given a thirty day notice of the proposed change in number.

4.4 Qualifying, Confirming and Service

- 4.4.1 Qualifying by Deacons.
- 4.4.2 During the month of March, the Chairman of Deacons will lead the active Deacon body to begin praying over the men they will nominate as proposed Deacon Ministers for the new church year. Prayer is to precede planning and deliberation over who is asked to serve.
- 4.4.3 After much prayer and guidance from the Holy Spirit, the active Deacons will nominate in **April** new deacons to fill the vacancies that have occurred during the year, or will occur by those who will rotate off in October. In the case of death, removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect a Deacon to fill the unexpired term
- 4.4.4 In **May**, each active Deacon will cast a ballot for the actual number of men to be elected from the list of those nominated in **April**. The result of this election will rank the men in the order to be sought by the Deacon Interview Council (DIC). The DIC will consist of three members and will be appointed in May by the Deacon Chairman and Vice Chairman, who will be standing members. The DIC will secure the list of proposed Deacon Ministers and begin the interview process. They will visit each man and ask each man to pray with them about the Deacon Ministry, to read and make notes of any questions regarding the Church Constitution, especially section four dealing with the Deacon Ministry. After two weeks of prayer, the DIC will meet with each man to discover his interest, willingness and qualifications to serve. Once confirmation has been made by the DIC, the proposed Deacon Ministers will be asked to meet with the deacon body at the scheduled deacons meeting in **June**.
- 4.4.5 The names of the proposed Deacon Ministers will be submitted to the church body through announcements and the Bethlehem Star following the deacons meeting in June. A special business meeting will be scheduled in June for the purpose of discussing and proposing the new Deacon Ministers to the church body.

4.5 Confirmed by the church.

- 4.5.1 The church body will vote in July during the morning worship service by ballot. Ballots will be marked, signed then collected. Church members will have as many votes as there are new deacons. The Deacon Interview Committee (DIC) and active deacons as needed will collect the ballots and confirm that each nominee received at least 75% support of the vote cast, which is required to serve as a Deacon Minister. In the event that a Deacon is not confirmed, the process listed in Section 4.4 will be repeated and a new election will be held at the time and date to be determined by the Deacons.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

- 4.5.2 The ordination/installation service for deacons confirmed in step 4.5.1 will be scheduled in August or in a worship service designated by the Pastor and Deacons.
- 4.5.3 This service will be held in the evening worship service and followed by a church wide fellowship.
- 4.5.4 Training for the new Deacons will be given by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (or someone they appoint) during the month of September.

4.6 Service

- 4.6.1 The Deacons shall be on a rotation system.
- 4.6.2 The Deacons shall be elected to serve 5 year terms beginning in October 1 following their election. Each year of the term (one fifth the number of Deacons) shall go from Active to Inactive status. In the case of death, removal or incapacity to serve, the deacons shall propose a nominee to fill the unexpired term.
- 4.6.3 Deacons that are Inactive status or have served their term of rotation shall be eligible for re-election following a one year waiting period.

4.7 Organization

- 4.7.1 The officers of the Deacons shall be a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Assistant Secretary. They shall be elected at the September's Deacon meeting and shall organize themselves for assuming duties and responsibilities as set forth in Section 4.

4.8 Deacon Emeritus

- 4.8.1 An ordained Deacon who has served this church honorably as an active Deacon and is no longer able to serve due age or health limitation, may make a request to the Chairman of Deacons for designation as Deacon Emeritus. Upon approval by the church at a church conference, shall be so declared. A Deacon Emeritus may attend all Deacon Meetings and take part in discussion but shall not vote. A Deacon Emeritus shall not be eligible for election as an active Deacon unless he resigns as Deacon Emeritus.

**Section 5: Moderator**

- 5.1 The moderator shall be the pastor. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of deacons shall preside; in the absence of those two, the meeting shall be postponed until such a time that the Pastor or Chairman of deacons can preside.

**Section 6: Clerk**

- 6.1 The clerk of the church shall be elected annually.
- 6.2 The clerk shall keep record of all the actions of the church.
- 6.3 He/She shall keep a register of the names of members with the dates of admission, dismissal or death, together with the record of baptisms.
- 6.4 He/She shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church.
- 6.5 The clerk shall consider it part of his/her responsibility to promote loyalty and efficiency in church life.
- 6.6 The clerk shall be solely responsible for the church records. Any access to the church records by any member must be in the presence of both clerk and pastor.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

**Section 7: Treasurer**

- 7.1 The church shall elect annually a church Treasurer.
- 7.2 It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive all money paid into the church.
- 7.3 He/She shall preserve, and payout, under the authorization of the church, upon receipt of vouchers, all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.
- 7.4 Payments of bills for local work and expenses and salaries for the pastor and other staff members shall be made by check.
- 7.5 He/She shall balance Church financial records and compile budget reports monthly. A financial report will be made to the deacons each month for overview. Once approved by the deacons the monthly financial report will be made available to church members.
- 7.6 The Treasurer shall give to the clerk an annual report for the fiscal year.
- 7.7 The Treasurer shall also serve as chairman of the budget committee.
- 7.8 The church secretary shall act as Assistant Treasurer.
- 7.9 Both the Treasurer and Assistant shall be bonded.

**Section 8: Trustees (Appointed by Nominating Committee on an Annual Basis)**

- 8.1 Trustees shall be responsible for administering any assigned special trust (e.g. Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust).
- 8.2 Trustees shall have power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property when so authorized by the action of the church body in business meeting.
- 8.3 Trustees shall affix their signature to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of the trustees are required.
- 8.4 Trustees shall be responsible for retaining all legal papers, deeds, and documents in a safety deposit box.
- 8.5 There will be three Trustees; however the number of Trustees may vary according to the needs of the church.
- 8.6 All Trustees shall be bonded.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

## **IV. Church Organizations**

### **Section 1: General**

1. All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

### **Section 2: Church Council**

1. The church council shall meet on a quarterly basis to evaluate, coordinate, and promote the plans and activities of all church organizations on a yearly, quarterly, monthly, and weekly calendar of church activities. The church council shall be composed of the pastor, who serves as chairman of the church council, ministerial staff, directors of Sunday school and Discipleship Training, W. M. U., Brotherhood, AWANA, Chairman of Deacons, Treasurer, Hostess Committee Chairperson, Youth Committee Chairperson and Children's Committee Chairperson. The church secretary shall serve as Secretary to the Church Council.

### **Section 3: Sunday school**

1. The Sunday school is the primary evangelistic and bible teaching arm of the church through outreach, enlistment of prospects in Sunday school classes, Bible teaching, discipleship, development, and fellowship with others. Persons may be removed from the Sunday school rolls either by request, permanently moving out of area or by death. The Sunday school shall cooperate with the pastor in leading in new member orientation as needed.

### **Section 4: Discipleship Training**

1. The role of Discipleship Training is to train church leadership; to train members in Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history, Church policy and organization; and to give orientation to new church members. Persons may be removed from Discipleship Training rolls either by request, permanently moving out of area or by death. The Discipleship Training shall cooperate with the pastor in leading in new member orientation as needed.

### **Section 5: Music**

1. The Music Ministry shall have the responsibility of developing a music education program through choirs for each age group. The music ministry has the responsibility of music for all areas of the church life.

### **Section 6: Women Missionary Union**

1. The WMU is the mission organization for women of the church. Its purpose is to enlist, teach and promote missions and fellowship among the women of the church and to assist the pastor in helping to interpret mission information as well as mission projects to the church body regarding local, state and national missions. The WMU is to provide leadership for the preschool children and girls mission organizations.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

**Section 7: Brotherhood**

1. The Brotherhood is a mission organization for men of the church. Its purpose is to enlist, teach and promote missions and fellowship among the men of the church and to assist the pastor in helping to interpret mission information as well as mission projects to the church body regarding local, state and national missions. The Brotherhood is to provide leadership for boys in their missionary organization.

**Section 8: Officers and Church Organizations**

1. The directors of Sunday school, Discipleship Training, WMU, Brotherhood, all teachers and officers in these organizations are elected annually by the church after having been nominated by the nominating committee.
2. The Sunday school and Discipleship Training directors are nominated for election three months earlier than the remaining teachers and officers of Church Organizations. The two directors will serve as ex-officio members with the three remaining members of the nominating committee.
3. All officers and teachers of the church organizations shall be an active part of worship services. If at any time a church organization member is not fulfilling his/her duties as called for, then it will be the nominating committee's and the pastor's responsibility to take necessary steps to scripturally overcome this in the best interest of the church. If it cannot be resolved in this manner, it will be referred to the deacons to make recommendations for the issue to be reconciled.

**V. Committees**

**Section 1: General**

1. Committees are established to assist the church in the execution of specific responsibilities. Committees will be considered as Administrative Committees, Special (Project Team or Task Force) and Standing Committees.

*Note: The ministry goal of the church is to involve as many church members as possible on all church committees, taking into consideration spiritual gifts and talents.*

- 1.1. All Administrative Committees shall serve on a three year rotation basis with one third to be elected annually, unless otherwise noted in these by-laws. The senior person or as elected by committee members of each Administrative Committee shall serve as the chairperson. Every attempt should be made to secure a chairperson prior to filling other vacancies. Each committee should select a vice chairperson and/or secretary as appropriate.
- 1.2. Special committees (Project Teams or Task Force), to include their responsibilities, may be established at any time by vote of the church and are dissolved upon completion of the work assigned to them by the church.
- 1.3. Standing committees are made up of Committee Chairpersons, Department Heads and additional members who maybe elected annually by the church body.  
(Examples: Church Council, Finance Committee, Hostess Committee)
- 1.4 Each standing committee should meet at least quarterly.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

**Section 2: Nominating Committee**

2. The purpose of this committee shall be to lead the church in filling all church-elected leadership positions filled by volunteers.

The responsibilities of this committee shall include:

- Select, interview, and enlist church program organization leaders, and general church officers.
- Approve volunteer workers before they are invited to serve in church-elected leadership positions.
- Present volunteer workers to the church for election.

2.1 The Nominating Committee is an Administrative Committee. (*See definition in Chapter V, Section 1, Step 1.1.*)

2.2 In the April church business meeting, the current nominating committee shall:

- Nominate one person to begin service in September, as the new member for the nominating committee for the upcoming church year.
- Present their nominations for election of a Sunday school and Discipleship Training director.

2.3 The current 3 member nominating committee, the newly elected Sunday school and Discipleship Training directors from the April business meeting will then compose a Nominating Committee of five persons which will present volunteer workers to the church for election in August.

**Section 3: Pastor/Ministerial Staff Search Committee (Special Committee)**

3. This committee shall seek out a suitable pastor/ministerial staff position for the church

*3.1 Selection:*

3.1.1 The Pastor or Ministerial Staff search committee is a Special Committee.

3.1.2 No husband and wife shall serve together on this committee.

3.1.3 This committee shall be elected by written ballot. Each ballot will contain two names.

3.1.4 This committee shall be composed of five members plus two alternates.

3.1.5 Three men and two women shall be elected and serve at one time as the pastor/ministerial staff search committee, with one man and woman serving as alternates.

3.1.6 Those seven (three men and two women committee with one man and one woman alternate) receiving the highest number of votes will serve as members and alternates of this committee. The one receiving most votes will be chairperson. In the case of a tie for chairperson, the chairperson will be elected by the seven receiving the highest number of votes.

3.1.7 Alternates to this committee may attend all committee meetings with no voting authority unless they are filling a voting committee member position.

*Amended 07.09.2008  
Section 2*

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

3.2 Duties:

- 3.2.1 This committee shall seek out a suitable pastor/ministerial staff position for the church and their recommendation will constitute a nomination, although any active church member has the privilege of making other nominations.
- 3.2.2 The committee, with the recommendation of the deacons, shall present only one name at a time for consideration by the church in business session.
- 3.2.3 At this time the housing, salary, time-off-the-field, vacation, and other requirements for this particular person will be explained to the church and voted upon prior to his coming for a trial sermon.
- 3.2.4 The prospective minister can then be called for a trial service, (Friday evening-Sunday morning, weekend), on a Sunday morning. That same Sunday evening a vote by ballot will be taken.
- 3.2.5 The minister will be called for an indefinite period if receiving a vote by ballot of at least three-fourths of the active members present and voting.
- 3.2.6 The minister, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by mutual consent, each giving the other party 30 days notice.
- 3.2.7 Additional guidelines regarding terminating a relationship, is addressed in Chapter III, Church Officers, Step 1.9 and 1.10.

**Section 4: Finance Committee (See Chapter III, Section 7)**

- 4.1 The Finance committee shall be comprised of the pastor and the members of the Church Council plus two additional members who are elected from the church floor in the **June** business meeting.
- 4.2 The Treasurer shall be the Finance committee chairperson.
- 4.3 The Finance committee shall draft a tentative church budget which shall include adequate provisions for all local needs and all missions. This is to be presented to the church as the annual budget and shall be voted on in a special called business meeting during a Sunday morning worship service.
- 4.4 The Finance committee shall monitor church giving and expenditures on a regular basis in addition to promoting an awareness of each Christians' obligation toward practicing responsible stewardship.

**Section 5: The Personnel Committee**

- 5.1 The Personnel Committee is an Administrative Committee of three persons.
- 5.2 The Personnel Committee shall work with the pastor and, as appropriate with related committees in the employment, supervision, and termination of non-ministerial staff members.
- 5.3 The Personnel Committee work will include a job description for each staff job as well as assistance to the pastor in counsel and supervision of all staff members.
- 5.4 The Personnel Committee will make recommendations to the Finance Committee for salaries and benefits of the staff after an evaluation in conjunction with the pastor has been made of each staff member's job performance.
- 5.5 The Personnel Committee will be responsible for maintaining a staff policies manual which should include relevant information such as the conditions of the call for ministerial staff, compensation information, benefits, vacation and sick leave policies, etc.
- 5.6 No relatives of the regular personnel or staff shall serve on the Personnel Committee, with a relative being defined as any family member down through and including uncles and aunts.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

**VI. Discipline**

**Section 1**

1. Should any unhappy differences arise between members; they are encouraged in tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in the 18th chapter of Matthew.

**Section 2**

1. Should any case of gross breach of covenant or of public scandal occur the deacons shall endeavor to remove the offense; and follow the guidelines in Chapter I, Section 4: Membership, Step 4.6. If an issue justifies legal counsel, then the deacons would seek to resolve or settle the issue in the best interest of the church and those involved.

**Section 3**

1. The term of any officer of the church including pastor, deacon, trustee, clerk, treasurer, Sunday school and Discipleship Training directors, or any other officer of the church organization along with Sunday school Teacher and any committee member shall be automatically terminated at the end of one month's prolonged absence, after refusal to attend church regularly, and after being contacted by the pastor and deacons, unless a satisfactory explanation can be given for the continued absence.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

**VII. Financial Policies**

**Section 1**

1. Tithes and offerings shall be recognized as our plan of finance.

**Section 2**

2. Any moneys designated for a certain use shall not be counted as tithes and offerings.

**Section 3**

3. The Unified Budget System shall be our method of finance.

**Section 4**

4. The Sunday school shall be used to promote our financial program.

**Section 5**

5. Any item purchased by individuals given to the church and voted on by the church shall become church property.

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*Constitution Revision 2007*

*Committee Members: Billy Hamm, Todd Friedman, Shane Money, Faye Roberts, Joy Parker  
Pastor: Norman Simmons*

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

***Appendix 1***

In the event that Bethlehem Baptist Church needs to expand its ministry foundation for church growth to be sustained and discipleship to be experienced in the life of the membership, ministry positions can be added for consideration.

Examples of ministry positions that could be considered are:

1. An education consultant
2. An evangelism consultant
3. A mission's consultant.

Process for selection:

1. The pastor recommends to the deacons the formation of a new ministry position based on the obvious needs of the membership and community.
2. Once the deacons approve, the recommendation is referred to the finance committee for salary evaluation, if salary is required.
3. Once those terms have been agreed to, then the deacon will bring the ministry position to the church for approval.
4. Once the church approves of the position being established, then the following guidelines will be implemented to fill the position.

Selection Guidelines:

1. The following three people will serve as members of the Church Consultant Committee (CCC): the pastor, the chairman of deacons, the chairman of the personnel committee.
2. The CCC will pray and seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit in making their recommendation.
3. The qualifications for the position will be based on the person's spiritual gifts, talents, commitment to the Lord and the local church, training and skills in the area of interest, and compatibility to the philosophy of ministry held by the pastor and church leadership.
4. The terms of the nonbinding contract will be six months and will be stated plainly in the agreed contract. It will be signed by the consultant and members of the CCC.
5. Salary: (if required). See #2 of the process. Salary deductions will be based on the ministerial tax codes. Issues regarding mileage to special functions and ministries will be planned for, expenses for office operation will be compensated, and training seminars will be supported for the consultant to keep abreast of new ministries that would be of help to the family of BBC.
6. Hours will be agreed to in the contract, but initially the consultant will work 10 to 15 hours per week with only training hours to be allocated for Sunday.
7. The consultant is expected to attend and provide leadership as needed for Sunday school, Discipleship Training and all worship services at BBC. This will help the person to be aware and help fulfill the churches needs. The consultant may be a Watch-Care Member for the first contract, but if the contract is renewed, full membership is expected.
8. Issues of concern will be addressed with the consultant by the pastor and if need by, by the personnel committee. If any issue cannot be resolved, then the deacons will be asked to give their counsel and recommendations.
9. Renewal of contract. Once the six months have been honored, the CCC will make a recommendation regarding the status of the consultant. If a new contract is needed, then the steps given in the process #1-3 will be followed.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

Special Concerns:

1. Office space may be limited, staff members and church leaders will be urged to give cooperation and exercise patience in the establishment of these new positions of leadership.
2. The consultant will be permitted to use his home office until arrangements can be setup to accommodate the ministry needs.
3. Prayer and support will be needed to help us grow and move forward during these days of seeking to strengthen our foundational base of ministry.

*BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS*

***Appendix 2***

In the event that Bethlehem Baptist Church needs to expand its administrative foundation for church organization and growth to be sustained, a Committee on Committees will be activated by approval of the church at a the regular scheduled church business meeting. The Nominating Committee will serve the purpose of the Committee on Committee until such time as the church deems necessary to elect the Committee on Committees.

**Committee on Committees (Job Description)**

1. The Committee on Committees is an Administrative Committee that shall be elected annually by the church following activation. The Committee on Committee will be composed of three persons or as many members as the church deems necessary.

The responsibilities of this committee shall include:

- Make recommendations to the church for filling of all committees and for deletion and creation of committees as deemed necessary.
- Evaluate and recommend any necessary changes in the statement of purpose and duties of the committees.
- Encourage all other committees to give feedback or changes which might be necessary for the function of that committee.