

**Constitution and By-Laws**  
**Rockville Baptist Church**  
**825 Hartford Turnpike**  
**Vernon, Connecticut**

Revised: March 2, 1966; January 26, 1968; January 26, 1974; April 24, 1974; July 31, 1974; April 30, 1975; April 27, 1977; April 24, 2002; November 12, 2006; June 1, 2008; May 31, 2009, October 6, 2019  
Reviewed by: Marie Galloway, Church Clerk, May 2009

**ARTICLE 1**  
**NAME**

This body of baptized Christian believers shall be known as the Rockville Baptist Church Inc.

**ARTICLE 2.**  
**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church shall be to maintain public services for worship of God, for the salvation of souls, for the edification of Christians through the preaching and teaching of God's Word, and for the active engaging, with prayers and financial support in the worldwide proclamation of God's saving grace expressed in the shed blood and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary.

**ARTICLE 3.**  
**STATEMENT OF FAITH**

1. We believe that the Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God, a divine, supernatural revelation. We believe in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the original writings of the Scriptures, and that as thus given they were wholly without error of any kind. II Tim. 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:20, 21.
2. We believe in the Trinity of the Godhead; one God eternally existing in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Matt. 28:19.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true Man. Matt. 1:23; Lk. 1:35.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God; he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God; and all human beings are born with a sinful nature. Rom. 3:23; Gen. 1:26; Isa. 53:6, Ps. 51:5.
5. We believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a substitutionary sacrifice; and all who believe in Him are justified by God, once and forever, in view of His shed blood. I John 2:2; Heb. 9:12; Eph. 2:8,9; John 1:12.
6. We believe in the bodily resurrection, ascension into Heaven, and personal, premillennial and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lk. 24:39; Acts 1:11.
7. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God. We believe in the personality of the Holy Spirit and that His ministry

is to reveal Christ to men, to convict of sin, to regenerate repentant sinners and, by His presence and power, to sanctify the lives of the redeemed John 3:3; John 1:23, 1 Peter 1: 23; John 16:8; I Peter 1:2, Rom. 8:26,27,28; John 14:16.

8. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting punishment of the lost. Rev. 20:12-15; Matt. 25:46; John 3:36.

9. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water to show forth as an act of obedience in a solemn and beautiful emblem of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin, and resurrection to a new life; that it is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership. Rom. 6:4,5; John 3:23; Acts 8:38.

10. We believe that the Lord's Supper is to be observed in obedience to Jesus' command and is the commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded always by self examination, remembering we are new creations, separated unto God from the things of the world, the flesh, and devil, to live a victorious Christian life. II Cor. 11:27-29.

#### **ARTICLE 4.**

#### **DECLARATION OF DOCTRINE AND PRINCIPLES**

God has graciously entered into covenant with His believing people (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-13). Jesus Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 8:6). His blood is the blood of the New Covenant, which infallibly secures all the benefits of the covenant for all of God's people (Mt. 26:26-28; Heb. 13:20-21). God has in this New Covenant made us members one of another in the Body of Christ, the Church (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:25).

Therefore, we have covenant responsibilities to each other, as well as to God. God has promised in this covenant to write His laws in our hearts and to cause us to walk in His ways (that is, to enable us to keep our covenant responsibilities).

The motivation and ability to obey God's laws springs from the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who by his death satisfied the holy wrath of God that was against us due to our sins. It is by the enablement of the Holy Spirit that we obey, in loving gratitude for Christ's righteousness, which has been imputed to us, and not to establish our own righteousness before God. We obey with the confidence that the end of Christ's death will be realized in us, that is, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:1) and that we should be a people "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

A living obedient faith in Christ involves at least three factors: our personal walk with God, our service in the body of Christ, and our testimony in the world. Therefore, the following paragraphs are a summary of what we believe are our covenant responsibilities toward God and toward one another, which are based upon God's Word. This summary forms the basis for our giving, our service, and receiving instruction for us and our families.

This agreement does not imply that we will never fall short of the goals, but that the desires of our heart are to fulfill each of the responsibilities stated. We trust that through our commitment we will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and be used of Him in edifying the saints and those around us.

### *The Congregation's Covenant*

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we covenant the following:

1. Having been saved from our sins and the penalty of death, and faith by the grace of Jesus Christ, and having been baptized to give testimony of our identification with the body of Christ and obedience to the Scriptures, we covenant to worship only the one true and living God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We will declare His glory to the nations. We will have no other gods before Him (John 4:23-24; Exodus 20:3).
2. We agree to demonstrate reverence and respect for the name of our God, not to use it in vain or take it upon ourselves carelessly, but to walk in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12). It is our desire to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and enjoy a growing relationship with Him, as we honor His name by walking in the Spirit and glorifying Him with everything we say and do (Col. 3:17, 23-24).
3. We agree to set apart the Lord's Day, to cease from our own works if they are not works of mercy or necessity, and to positively sanctify the day by special exercises of corporate and private worship (Exodus 20:11; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).
4. We covenant to submit to the authority of the Scriptures as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalm 11:2; 2 Tim. 3:16-17), and to place ourselves under the authority of the church leadership, being submissive to its leading, and to support and pray for them, while being diligent to preserve unity and peace in the body (Hebrews 13:7, 17; Eph. 4:1-31; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17-20; 1 Pet. 5:1-5).
5. We will endeavor to take responsibility to maintain a close relationship with the Lord through spiritual disciplines such as regular personal and family Bible study, prayer, and fellowship with the saints. An evidence of our journey toward spiritual maturity in Christ will be apparent through our regular participation in the corporate worship services and other ministry opportunities (Ps. 119:97, 105; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25).
6. We agree to possess our bodies in holiness and purity as vessels joined to Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit and to avoid all uncleanness of thought, speech, worldly lust, or action by God's grace (Eph. 4:29; 1 Jn. 2:16; 2 Cor. 2:16; 2 Tim. 2:15-26), forgiving as we have been forgiven by God (Eph. 4:32). We endeavor to abstain from things that might cause others to stumble or hinder our walk with the Lord or bring reproach to the cause of Christ (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8:9-13; 1 Thess. 4:1-8).
7. We will strive to properly manage the resources God has given us, including our time, body, spiritual gifts and talents, attitudes, finances and possessions (Eph. 4:1-16, 5:15-18; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26; Prov. 3:9-10). We will use them for the building up of the Body, praying for its needs and availing ourselves for service. This includes regular giving to the church that is sacrificial and cheerful (2 Cor. 8:5, 9; 9:8).
8. We covenant to practice the humility and sacrificial attitude of Christ by considering the needs of others (Phil. 2:1-11), guarding our tongue (Prov. 16:28), exercising biblical love when dealing with others (John 13:34), and cultivating spiritual friendships (Prov. 17:17). We will be ready to fulfill the Great Commission by proclaiming and living the gospel before the lost world (Matt. 28:18-20).

9. We covenant to follow the biblical procedures of church discipline, to seek to restore someone with a spirit of gentleness and humility, and to submit ourselves to such discipline should it become necessary (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1-5).

### *The Leadership Covenant*

With the help of the Holy Spirit, the church leadership covenants the following:

1. We who are charged with the oversight of the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2), agree to commit ourselves to lovingly care for the Body, watch out for the welfare of their souls, help to equip them to do the work of the ministry, while bringing them into maturity in Christ (Heb. 13:1; 1 Thess. 5:12; Eph. 4:11-13) by providing teaching, preaching and counsel from the Scriptures (Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18); and this teaching will span the whole counsel of God's Word (Acts 20:27-28).

2. We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31); to seek God's will for the church community by studying the Scriptures and following the leading of the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5); to set an example for the church as we together strive to fulfill the duties of the Body (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12); and to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).

3. We covenant to assist members in times of need (Acts 2:42-27, 4:32-35; James 2:14-17) and pray regularly for them, particularly when they are under spiritual attack or physically ill (James 5).

4. We covenant that we will meet and maintain the criteria as set forth in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13, 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

## **ARTICLE 5 MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in this local body of believers is a privilege that may be extended by the existing members to qualified individuals who seek such an affiliation. All are welcome to attend services at the Rockville Baptist Church. However, only those qualified candidates who desire to become members, and whose request for membership is accepted and approved by simple majority vote of Active Members in Good Standing present at an appropriately called business meeting, may be received into membership.

### **SECTION A. Reception of Members.**

1. Eligible candidates seeking membership in Rockville Baptist Church must meet the standards and qualifications as described in the following articles. The membership request of any eligible candidates must be brought before the existing membership for vote as described in the introduction to this article. All candidates must subscribe to the church covenant and articles of faith.

h. By Baptism. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change of heart, and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this church may, following baptism, be received into its membership. All candidates for baptism shall first be examined by the board of deacons for evidence of conversion and good character.

i. By letter/experience. Any person may be received into membership of this church by letter from another church or by biblical conversion, provided the candidate appears before the Board of Deacons and gives such evidence as shall be required, proving he or she has experienced the new birth in Christ,

exhibits Christian conduct, and has scriptural faith. Candidates must also give proof of previous believer's baptism by immersion.

j. By restoration. Excluded members may receive membership into this church upon examination and recommendation of the Board of Deacons by submitting satisfactory evidence of Christian character.

2. Action by vote on the reception, restoration, or dismissal of members shall be taken at any regularly called business meeting of the church and shall not take place in the presence of the candidates.

3. Each candidate, having shown proof of fulfilling the necessary requirements for membership, and upon presentation to the church, shall give a testimony or answer questions from the pastor about his or her faith. Romans 10:9-11.

4. The names of the candidates shall be posted two weeks before the vote of the church. If there is any objection to the candidates, the objection shall be made to the Board of Deacons prior to the church meeting.

#### **SECTION B. Duties and Privileges of Membership.**

1. Such persons shall be members of this church who fulfill the qualifications set forth in Section A and whose membership has been approved by an appropriate vote. However, the right to vote on all matters of business in the church shall be vested only in its Active Members in Good Standing (that is, members not on the inactive list or not considered to be Members Not In Good Standing) who have attained the age of 16 years. Except for the power of voting, all members under age 16 shall have all the privileges of the church, including the attending of business meetings and expression from the floor. No member under 16 years of age shall be elected to the stated offices of the church.

2. On becoming members of this church, each person covenants to honor, esteem, and love his pastor; to pray for him, to recognize his authority in spiritual matters of the church (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13); to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; and to support the church, as the Lord enables, by attendance in Sunday School and worship services. Additionally, each person covenants to support the church with tithes and offerings, in spiritual activities and in property maintenance activities.

3. Only those who are considered Active Members In Good Standing (section C.1. below) are eligible to hold elected or appointed offices within the church. Any members holding such an office who, subsequent to taking that office, have their membership standing changed to Active Not In Good Standing or to Inactive (sections C.2. and C.3. below) are automatically disqualified and terminated from holding office.

#### **SECTION C. Membership Standing.**

Membership in this church will be considered to be in one of the following classifications. Church members may be considered:

1. Active Members In Good Standing. This requires fulfilling the duties of membership as listed in Section B, article 2, as well as fulfilling the following requirements:

- a. not under church discipline as determined by the church by-laws and the Board of Deacons.
- b. not in violation of the church covenant, as determined by the Board of Deacons.

c. not holding to doctrine rejected by this church (see the church's statement of faith).

2. Members Not In Good Standing. Active members not meeting the requirements stated in item 1 above, as determined by the Board of Deacons, are considered to be not in good standing. Upon successful resolution, as determined by the Board of Deacons, of the conditions that resulted in a member being placed in this standing, the Board of Deacons may restore a member from this list to the classification Active Members In Good Standing.

3. Inactive Members. Any member absent from the church three (3) consecutive months, and during which time no satisfactory information for the absence is received, may have his or her name placed on the inactive list by direction of the Board of Deacons. Prior to dismissal, and upon satisfactory resumption of regular attendance as determined by the Board of Deacons, the Board of Deacons may restore a member listed in this category to the classification Active Member in Good Standing. If a member has intentionally pursued fellowship with another church (indicated by regular attendance at the Sunday worship of that church), a member of the Board of Deacons shall encourage them by phone and letter to formally unite with that church. If after a period of three months they still have not changed their membership, the Board of Deacons may direct the clerk to erase the member's name from the Church Roll, indicating that we can no longer meaningfully care for their souls.

#### **SECTION D. Dismissal of Members.**

A person's membership in this church will be terminated as a result of any of the following circumstances:

1. By letter. Any active member in good standing who desires a letter of dismissal and recommendation to any other church is entitled to receive it upon his request. The name of the church to which membership is to be transferred must be identified in the request, and the letter shall be sent to the pastor or clerk of that church. This letter shall be valid as a recommendation for six months only from its date, unless renewed, and this restriction shall be stated in the letter. No letter will be issued unless the member is an active member in good standing. Should the Board of Deacons determine that the member's request for a letter of dismissal and recommendation be to avoid church discipline or to avoid other unresolved relationships, the request shall not be granted until the disciplinary process has been completed or the relationships have been reconciled (see Matthew 18:12-20 and the section on Accountability and Church discipline).

2. By exclusion. In cases involving sin for which repentance is not made, or in case of delinquency through failure to comply with covenant obligations, a member may be excluded, following the application of church discipline and when exclusion is so recommended by the Board of Deacons (see the section on Accountability and Church Discipline).

3. Inactive. Upon instruction from the Board of Deacons, a person's membership will be terminated if that member has been on the inactive list for a period of six (6) consecutive months, with no satisfactory information being received. During this six (6) month period, the Board of Deacons and active members of the church will make multiple inquiries and attempt to obtain satisfactory information in determining the reasons for the person's absence. Good faith efforts will be made to directly contact the absent member, whenever possible. The Board of Deacons will take in to consideration extenuating circumstances such as location and physical inability to attend in determining whether or not to take such action.

4. Membership in another church. No member of this church may hold simultaneous membership in another church. Uniting in membership with another church automatically terminates a person's membership in the Rockville Baptist Church, without notice.

5. By death.

### **SECTION E. Accountability and Church Discipline.**

1. Accountability and Discipline Are Signs of God's Love . God has established the church to reflect his character, wisdom and glory in the midst of a fallen world (Eph. 3:10-11). He loves his church so much that he sent his Son to die for her (Eph. 5:25). His ultimate purpose for his church is to present her as a gift to his Son; thus Scripture refers to the church as the "bride" of Christ (Rev. 19:7). For this reason the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are continually working to purify the church and bring her to maturity (Eph. 5:25-27).

This does not mean that God expects the church to be made up of perfectly pure people. He knows that the best of churches are still companies of sinners who wrestle daily with remaining sin (1 John 1:8; Phil. 3:12). Therefore, it would be unbiblical for us to expect church members to live perfectly. What we can do, however, is confess our common struggle with sin and our mutual need for God's mercy and grace. We also can spur one another on toward maturity by encouraging and holding each other accountable to love, seek after, and obey God with all of our hearts, souls, minds and strength, and to love others as we love ourselves (Mark 12:30-31; Heb. 10:24-25).

The Bible sometimes refers to this process of mutual encouragement and accountability as "discipline." The Bible never presents church discipline as being negative, legalistic or harsh, as modern society does. True discipline originates from God himself and is always presented as a sign of genuine love (Heb. 12:6, Ps. 94:12, Rev. 3:19).

God's discipline in the church, like the discipline in a good family, is intended to be primarily positive, instructive and encouraging. This process, which is sometimes referred to as "formative discipline," involves preaching, teaching, prayer, personal Bible study, small group fellowship and countless other enjoyable activities that challenge and encourage us to love and serve God more wholeheartedly.

On rare occasions God's discipline, like the discipline in a family with growing children, also may have a corrective purpose. When we forget or disobey what God has taught us, he corrects us. One way he does this is to call the church to seek after us and lead us back onto the right track. This process, which is sometimes called "corrective" or "restorative" discipline, is likened in Scripture to a shepherd seeking after a lost sheep (Matt. 18:12-13).

Thus, restorative or corrective discipline is never to be done in a harsh, vengeful or self-righteous manner. It is always to be carried out in humility and love, with the goals of restoring someone to a close walk with Christ (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1), protecting others from harm (1 Cor. 5:6), and showing respect for the honor and glory of God's name (1 Pet. 2:12).

Biblical discipline is similar to the discipline we value in other aspects of life. We admire parents who consistently teach their children how to behave properly and lovingly discipline them when they disobey. We value music teachers who bring out the best in their students by teaching them proper

technique and consistently pointing out their errors so they can play a piece properly. The same principles apply to the family of God. We, too, need to be taught what is right and to be lovingly corrected when we do something contrary to what God teaches us in his Word. Therefore, we as a church are committed to help one another obey God's command to be "self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined" (Titus 1:8).

The pastor and deacons of our church recognize that God has called them to an even higher level of accountability regarding their faith and conduct (James 3:1; 1 Tim. 5:19-20). Therefore, they are committed to listening humbly to loving correction from each other or from any member in our church, and, if necessary, to submitting themselves to the corrective discipline of our body.

2. Most Corrective Discipline Is Private, Personal and Informal. God gives every believer grace to be self-disciplined (2 Tim. 1:7). Thus discipline always begins as a personal matter and usually remains that way, as each of us studies God's Word, seeks him in prayer, and draws on his grace to identify and change sinful habits and grow in godliness.

But sometimes we are blind to our sins or so tangled in them that we cannot get free on our own. This is why the Bible says, "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently" (Gal. 6:1). In obedience to this command, we are committed to giving and receiving loving correction within our church whenever a sin (whether in word, behavior or doctrine) seems too serious to overlook (Prov. 19:11).

If repeated private conversations do not lead another person to repentance, Jesus commands that we ask other brothers or sisters to get involved (Mt. 18:16). If informal conversations with these people fail to resolve the matter, then we may seek the involvement of more influential people, such as a small group leader, Sunday school teacher or deacon. If these efforts fail to bring a brother or sister to repentance, and if the issue is too serious to overlook, we will move into what may be called "formal discipline."

3. Formal Discipline May Involve the Entire Church. If an individual persistently refuses to listen to personal and informal correction to turn from speech or behavior the Bible defines as sin, Jesus commands us to "tell it to the church" (Mt. 18:17a). This first involves informing the pastor and deacons about the situation. If the offense is not likely to cause imminent harm to others, our pastor and deacons may approach the individual privately to personally establish the facts and encourage repentance of any sin they discover. The individual will be given every reasonable opportunity to explain and defend his or her actions. If the individual recognizes his sin and repents, the matter ends there, unless a confession to additional people is needed. If an offense is likely to harm others or lead them into sin, or cause division or disruption, our pastor and deacons may accelerate the disciplinary process and move promptly to protect the church (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Titus 3:10-11).

As the disciplinary process progresses, our pastor and deacons may impose a variety of sanctions to encourage repentance, including but not limited to private admonition, withholding of the Lord's Supper, removal from office, and, as a last resort, removal from membership (Matt. 5:23-24; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Matt. 18:17).

If the straying individual does not repent in response to private appeals from our pastor and deacons, they may inform others in the church who may be able to influence that individual or be willing to pray



for him or her, or people who might be harmed or affected by that person's behavior. This step may include close friends, a small group, a Sunday school class, or the entire congregation if our pastor and deacons deem it to be appropriate (Matt. 18:17, 1 Tim. 5:20).

If, after a reasonable period of time, the individual still refuses to change, then our pastor and deacons will direct the church clerk to remove the individual from membership and will inform the congregation of the action taken. We will treat the individual as an unbeliever. This means that we will no longer treat him as a fellow Christian. Instead of having casual, relaxed fellowship with the individual, we will look for opportunities to lovingly bring the gospel to him, remind him of God's holiness and mercy, and call him to repent and put his faith in Christ (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20).

We realize that our natural human response to correction often is to hide or run away from accountability (Gen. 3:8-10). To avoid falling into this age-old trap and to strengthen our church's ability to rescue us if we are caught in sin, we agree not to run away from this church to avoid corrective discipline. Therefore, we waive our right to withdraw from membership or accountability if discipline is pending against us. Although we are free to stop attending the church at any time, we agree that a withdrawal while discipline is pending will not be given effect until the church has fulfilled its God-given responsibilities to encourage our repentance and restoration, and to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, as described in these Commitments (Matt. 18:12-14; Gal. 6:1; Heb. 13:17).

If an individual leaves the church while discipline is in effect or is being considered, and our pastor and deacons learn that he or she is attending another church, they may inform that church of the situation and ask its pastor and deacons to encourage the individual to repent and be reconciled to the Lord and to any people he or she has offended. This action is intended both to help the individual find freedom from his sin and to warn the other church about the harm that he or she might do to their members (see Matt. 18:12-14; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 3 John 1:9-10).

Loving restoration always stands at the heart of the disciplinary process. If an individual repents, and our pastor and deacons confirm his or her sincerity, we will rejoice together and gladly imitate God's forgiveness by restoring the person to fellowship within the body (see Matt. 18:13; Luke 15:3-7, 11-32; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; Col. 3:12-14).

People who have been excluded from another church will not be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper in our church, to become members, or to participate in the regular fellowship of our church until they have repented of their sins and made a reasonable effort to be reconciled, or our pastor and deacons have determined that the discipline of the former church was not biblically appropriate.

As we pursue the blessings of accountability and church discipline, we will hold fast to the promise of Scripture: "God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it" (Heb. 12:10-11).

## **ARTICLE 6.** **CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND AFFILIATIONS**

The church's government is vested in the body which composes its membership. It shall be an independent Baptist Church subscribing to the Declarations in the Church Covenant and the Statement of Faith. Its government shall be democratic in nature with a majority vote necessary to administer the

church's business with the exception of the cases stated elsewhere in these Rules and Regulations that require more than a majority vote for specific reasons.

This constitution may be amended only upon the approval of three-fourths of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose and recommended by a majority of the Board of Deacons and Church Council. Such recommendations for amendments may be made at the annual meeting of the church or at any specially called meeting for such purpose. The recommendations must then be approved by a majority of the Deacons and Church Council and the meeting for consideration announced two successive Sundays prior to the meeting.

## **ARTICLE 7.** **OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

**SECTION A. The Officers and Boards of the Church** shall consist of the following: Pastor, Board of Deacons, Board of Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee, Board of Trustees, Board of Missions, Board of Christian Education, Church Clerk, Moderator, Church Finance Recorder, Treasurer, Music Committee, and Meeting Coordinator. The Church Council shall consist of: Pastor, all elected and appointed members of the Church who hold offices, Chairman of all Church Boards, and the Sunday School Superintendent and Officers. All officers and Boards will serve for one year unless stated otherwise in this Constitution.

**SECTION B. Officer Eligibility.** No person shall be eligible to hold office in this Church who is not a member of this Church in good standing.

**SECTION C. Other Organizations and Officers.** With the approval of the Church, organizations and officers may be created to aid in the efficiency of the Church work or to promote the legitimate interests of the Church.

## **ARTICLE 8.** **THE PASTORATE**

**SECTION A. Hiring of Pastor.** In case of a vacancy in the Pastorate, the Deacon Board shall appoint a committee to seek a suitable person who subscribes to and Signs a statement that he subscribes to the Statement of Faith and the Church Covenant and these By-laws. It shall be the duty of the committee to examine carefully the record of such a person as to his special fitness for this Church, and, upon the approval of the Board of Deacons, he shall be invited to preach. Upon the approval of three-fourths of the members present at such a special meeting called for the purpose, with the customary notice given, he shall be elected Pastor of the Church, at a salary to be stated. The vote shall be taken by secret ballot. Only one candidate shall be considered at a time. The Pastor shall serve until his pastorate is terminated by resignation or by the request of not less than two-thirds of the votes at a special meeting held for the specific purpose of considering such action, of which the customary notice has been given. The vote shall be taken by secret ballot. The Pastor shall give a minimum of 30 days notice before termination of service. In the event that the Congregation votes that the Pastor's services shall be terminated abruptly, the salary involved shall continue for 30 days. In the event of immorality or misconduct, his services shall be immediately terminated and the Church assumes no further responsibility.

**SECTION B. Duties of the Pastor.** It shall be the duty of the Pastor to give himself to prayer and the ministry of the Word, to have general oversight of the spiritual matters of the Church and its members

by pastoral counsel, visitation, and administering of the ordinances of the Church and to seek in public and in private the Salvation of souls. If, at any time, his personal beliefs, living, preaching, or teaching shall not be in full accord with the doctrinal standing and Statement of Faith and Covenant of this Church, his services shall be terminated.

**ARTICLE 9.**  
**DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

**SECTION A. Board of Deacons.**

The Board of Deacons shall have general oversight of the spiritual life of the Church. The Deacons shall not be more than seven in number, and the term shall be for seven years. If vacancies occur, members may be elected up to the seven in number with terms to expire in order that only one Deacon retires from the Board each year. No member of the Board of Deacons serving a full seven year term shall be eligible for re-election for a period of at least one year.

The Chairman of the Deacon Board shall be elected annually. A vote shall be taken by a secret ballot without nomination or discussion as soon as possible after the Annual Business Meeting of the Church. The first meeting of the Deacon Board after the annual meeting shall be called by the Pastor. Candidates who meet the spiritual qualifications as Deacons as described in I Timothy 3 shall be nominated by the board of Deacons and the Pastor after prayer and careful consideration. The name or names shall be given to the Nominating Committee who nominates other officers and members of Boards of the Church. They shall be presented to the Church for election along with other officers for nomination and election by the Church. The office as Deacon is the only nomination that must have the approval of The Board of Deacons before election.

The Deacons shall appoint one of the members to be custodian of the Fellowship Fund of the Church, offerings for which shall be taken at the Communion. He shall keep a careful account of the fund to be audited annually by his brother Deacons, but no report of how the money is expended shall be made outside of the Deacons and Pastor, except for a report to the Annual Church Meeting of the amount received and the balance on hand.

It shall be the duty of the Deacons to ascertain such individuals who are in need and to use the Fellowship Fund for the help of said persons; to visit and aid the Pastor in matters relating to the spiritual and moral use of Church property. They shall also see that strangers worshipping with us are personally welcomed. The Deacons shall make every effort to attend all worship services, prayer groups, and Sunday School activities as possible. In the absence of the Pastor, the Deacons shall provide for the services of the Church.

The Deacons shall consider with the Pastor all applications for membership. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Chairman, or at the request in writing of three members of the Board. At any of these meetings, a majority vote and at least three votes cast, shall be necessary for a quorum.

The minutes of the meetings of the Deacons shall be kept in a permanent book provided and duplicated copies given to all members. When a Deacon resigns or is no longer in attendance, he is responsible to turn all copies of the duplicated minutes back to the Chairman or Pastor as these minutes are to be kept in confidence within the Deacon Board.

The Board of Deacons shall appoint a Committee of women for Spiritual Service, one to be appointed each year, as determined by the Board of Deacons, for a term of seven years. Their appointment is made after much prayer and careful consideration that the Church may be strengthened by their services. They shall inquire after those who absent themselves from the services of the Church; visit those who are ill; watch for and welcome women strangers; assist candidates for Baptism; provide and care for the table and elements in preparation for and after observance of the Lord' Supper; and otherwise work and assist the Deacons and Pastor. They may meet with the Board of Deacons upon call but do not have a right to vote.

**SECTION B. Deacon Emeritus.**

After a Deacon has served for more than one term and has given faithful service, he may be elected to the Board Emeritus for the rest of his life. He is to give counsel to the Board and serve in as many capacities as possible. It is considered a high honor to be elected in Emeritus. He shall or may meet with the Board of Deacons but does not have the right to vote.

**SECTION C. Board of Trustees.**

a. The Board of Trustees shall consist of up to five elected members plus the Treasurer, one Trustee to be elected at each annual meeting. Except for the Treasurer, each Trustee shall be elected for a term of five years. At the next scheduled meeting the Trustees for the ensuing year shall meet and appoint from their number a Chairman of the Board and a Secretary.

b. It shall be the duty of the Chairman, or in his absence, of the Secretary, to call a meeting of the Board whenever there is business demanding its action.

c. The Trustees shall have general charge of the finances of the Church, and shall, subject however to any action of the Church, hold in trust all its property, and act for the Church. It shall be their duty to devise and recommend plans for raising funds for Church expenses, to employ a sexton, and keep the Church property in proper repair.

d. They shall have no power to convey or transfer the property of the Church, or execute bond, mortgage or deed, only as directed by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a regularly called Business Meeting, and no action of any of the Trustees involving the expenditure of money shall be binding upon the Church or its Treasurer, unless voted by a majority of the Whole Board in a meeting of which all its members shall have been duly notified, and their action recorded by the Secretary of the Board, except that the Treasurer may pay bills or the necessary incidental expenses not exceeding the sum of one-hundred dollars (\$100.00) monthly.

e. Collector- The collecting, counting, and depositing of all money will be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. When necessary the Board of Trustees may call upon any member of the Church to assist in counting. The Trustees are responsible for turning all envelopes and collection records over to the Church Finance Recorder.

f. Church Finance Recorder- The Church Finance Recorder shall be elected from the Church membership at any regular Church Business Meeting. This office will run through the fiscal year. The duties of Church Finance Recorder will consist of: 1) keeping a complete and detailed record of all known contributions, 2) will give a summary statement at the Semi-Annual and Annual Church Business

Meeting, 3) prepare and distribute statements to known donors as early as possible in the ensuing year for Income Tax purposes, and 4) will prepare only upon special request a quarterly statement to anyone who requests it.

**SECTION D. Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee.**

This Committee shall consist of the Chairman of the Boards of Deacons and Trustees, or designated representatives of these Boards, and three members elected by the Church annually. It shall be the duty of this Committee to recommend to the Church at its regular fourth quarter meeting a proposed unified budget for the coming year. The Committee will also perform an audit of the financial records of the Church annually, performing such tests of the records as they consider necessary in the circumstances, and reporting their findings at the annual meeting.

**SECTION E. Board of Missions.**

There shall be a Board of Missions and shall consist of five persons, one to be elected at each annual meeting for a term of five years. They shall elect their own Chairman. It shall be their duty to increase interest in missions and missionary giving, to promote special events, such as missionary speakers, films and other projects to encourage the support and interest of the Church in its missionaries and missions in general and shall convey communications from the mission field to the Church.

**SECTION F. Board of Christian Education.**

Members of the Board of Christian Education shall consist of a Chairman which shall be elected by the Church, the Sunday School Superintendent, an adult leader, one youth representative from each of the youth ministries, children's leader, Leadership Trainer, Missionary and Stewardship Leader, a member of the Board of Deacons, and the Pastor. All positions shall be elected by the Church at its annual meeting. They shall meet monthly and have authority over the Sunday School and general Christian Education within the Church.

**SECTION G. Clerk.**

It shall be the duty of the Church Clerk to keep a permanent record of the minutes of Church Business Meetings; to sign letters of dismissal; to maintain a register of members including their address and date of membership; to preserve on file all communication and written official reports; to notify all officers, members of Committees or Boards of their election or appointment; and to enter upon records current events in the life of the Church that are likely to be of historical value. The Clerk shall also make an annual report to the Church upon the status of its Membership and keep on hand a supply of active membership lists.

**SECTION H. Moderator.**

The duties of the Moderator shall be to preside at all Church Business Meetings. He shall conduct the meetings according to "Robert's Rules of Order" and have the authority of both Moderator and Parliamentarian. Each meeting shall be conducted in reverence to God.

**SECTION I. Organist and-or Pianist.**

The Organist and-or Pianist shall be selected by the Board of Deacons subject to approval of the Music Committee at a salary to be approved of by the Board of Trustees, and the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee.

**SECTION J. Treasurer.**

The Treasurer shall be the custodian of all expense funds belonging to the Church, with the acceptance of the Deacon's Fellowship Fund. He shall disburse money and pay only those bills approved by the Church, the Board of Trustees, subject to the limitations set forth in SECTION C. of the By-laws, or supervisors of Church approved budget provisions. He shall make reports at the regular meetings of the Trustees and the Church as to incomes, expenditures, and the balance on hand.

**SECTION K. Music Committee.**

The Music Committee shall consist of four persons with the organist and-or pianist and choir director as ex-officio members. The duties of this committee shall be to act for the Church in providing suitable Christian music for the regular worship service, using the funds apportioned by the Church for this purpose. It shall be the duty of them to coordinate the activities of the choir and counsel with the members thereof.

**SECTION L. Meeting Coordinator.**

The duties of the Meeting Coordinator shall be to schedule all meetings so as no two meetings interfere. No meetings shall be held in the Church or out without prior approval of this coordinator. The Coordinator shall provide the custodian with a meeting schedule.

**SECTION M. Church Council.**

The Moderator shall preside and be responsible for introducing matters of interest to the Council. The Church Council shall be the general planning board of the Church. It shall meet at least once every three months as specified by the Council and the date approved by the Meeting Coordinator. It shall constantly study the needs of the Church and shall determine ways by which its policies and program may best be carried forward. It shall seek to correlate the programs of all departments and groups into one coordinated whole. It shall have power to form or add to existing committees if such a need arises in the performing of Church Business

**SECTION N. Nominating Committee.**

The Nominating Committee shall consist of three Church members recommended by the Church Council and elected by the Church at the annual meeting. They shall serve on a continuous basis for one year, not only to recommend candidates for officers at the next annual Church meeting, but for vacancies which may occur during the year.

**ARTICLE 10.**

**OTHER BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

**SECTION A. Sunday School Council.**

There shall be a Sunday School Council with the Sunday School Superintendent as Chairman and shall consist of all Sunday School teachers and staff. This Council shall meet regularly and discuss problems concerning the Sunday School and plan ways to more efficiently present the Gospel.

**ARTICLE 11.**

**MEETINGS**

**SECTION A. Business Meetings.**

The Church as a body shall meet annually. The date for the annual meeting shall be determined by January and held no later than March 31. Reports of all phases of the Church shall be made in writing at the annual meeting. The date shall be approved by the Meeting Coordinator.

**SECTION B. Special Meetings.**

Special Meetings may be called by the Pastor, Chairman of the Deacon Board, or by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees if urgent business needs action that cannot be postponed until a regular meeting.

**SECTION C. Fiscal Year.**

The Fiscal Year shall begin January 1 and close December 31 of each year.

**SECTION D. Quorum.**

Eleven (11) members shall constitute a Quorum for the transaction of business at regularly scheduled or specially called Business Meetings.

**ARTICLE 12.**  
**DISSOLUTION**

Upon an affirmative vote at a special business meeting called for the purpose of dissolution of Rockville Baptist Church Inc., assets owned by the church shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code. Such distribution will be made to one or more gospel preaching ministries holding the same doctrinal positions as Rockville Baptist Church. Those ministries would be selected by the Rockville Baptist Church Inc. membership at the same meeting as the vote for dissolution.

**Statement on Human Sexuality adopted May 31, 2009:**

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments must be our authority for our views on sexual morality. We believe that God's intention for marriage is for one man and one woman for all their lives. This intention was expressed when God created human beings. Jesus and the apostles confirmed God's intention. The only biblically ordained avenue of sexual expression is between one man and one woman in a marriage relationship.

Other avenues of sexual expression such as homosexuality, adultery, bestiality and pedophilia are not alternative expressions of human sexuality; they are sin and are active negations of God's Creation intent. As a Christian church we would only perform and encourage marriages between a man and a woman who are committed followers of Jesus Christ and are living by these biblical standards of sexuality.

We believe homosexual orientation and practice is a result of the fall of human beings into sin. The fall affects every person who has lived. If biological or family causes of homosexuality are ever discovered, these would not condone homosexual behavior, though they should increase our compassion and patience for those who are struggling with such temptations.

We believe in the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to transform those who struggle with all forms of sexual sin. The process of change is the same as the process of change for any temptation or sin. Freedom and forgiveness come through Jesus Christ, no matter how imperfectly we sinners struggle.

We believe that all human beings have been created in the image of God and should be treated with dignity. We believe that spiteful or arrogant treatment of people with homosexual orientation is wrong. We believe this respect involves honest, reasonable, non-violent sharing of biblical truth about the immorality of homosexual behavior and orientation.

We believe that as a visible church of Jesus Christ that we should reach out in love and truth to minister to those touched by homosexuality. Those who fight biblically against their sexual temptations should be patiently encouraged in their battle. We believe that heterosexual and homosexual persons who recognize their sin and struggle against it should both find grace and help in our church.