

Constitution, By-Laws and Articles of Faith

CONSTITUTION, COVENANT, ARTICLES OF FAITH AND BYLAWS OF BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH

PREAMBLE

This Constitution, Church Covenant, Articles of Faith, and Bylaws are made to:

1. Preserve and secure the biblical principles of our faith, those things most surely believed among us.
2. Preserve the liberties of each individual member of the church.
3. Ensure freedom of action of independence from any religious body or organization.
4. Provide for orderly conduct, consistent with the accepted tenets of the Christian faith, of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing church members.

CONSTITUTION

I. Name

The name of this church is Bethlehem Baptist Church. Our church history research indicates Bethlehem Baptist Church probably became an official congregation in 1828 with 134 members as one of the first churches in Harris County Georgia shortly after the Creek Indians ceded Indian land in 1827. It was registered as a charter member of the Columbus Baptist Association created in 1829. One of the few records existing from early history is the 1833 deed for land on which the church sits. In 1889, the Pine Mountain Baptist Association was organized, with Bethlehem as a charter member. Bethlehem Baptist Church continues to be affiliated with the Pine Mountain Baptist Association, the Georgia Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

II. Registered Office

The physical address of the principal office of this church is: 1080 Bethlehem Church Road, Hamilton, Georgia 31811. The mailing address is: P.O. Box 185, Pine Mountain Valley, Georgia 31823

III. Purpose

The purposes of Bethlehem Baptist Church are:

1. To worship and serve God and to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ as set forth in Matthew 28:19-20.
2. To minister to the needs of the members and others as the church is able to do so.
3. To do any and all things related to and in connection with the carrying out of the object and purpose herein as set forth.

IV. Government

The government of Bethlehem Baptist Church is vested in its members. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of its life and organization. It recognizes the needs for mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. This church will cooperate with and mutually work with Pine Mountain Baptist Association, Georgia Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. The fiscal year for Bethlehem Baptist Church begins on October 1 and ends on September 30.

V. Nonprofit Status

This church is not organized for profit.

CHURCH COVENANT

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, voluntarily associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that it's scriptural officers are Pastors and elected lay persons.

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, 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 angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

For the Advancement of Bethlehem Baptist Church

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, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; in regular attendance, worshipping and studying together.

As Christian Stewards

To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.

Alone and At Home

We also engage to maintain individual and family devotions; to raise up our children in the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

Before the World

To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale, distribution, or use of intoxicating substances, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

Toward One Another

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the teachings of our Savior to secure it without delay.

When We Move

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with another church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

- 1) We believe the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God, without any error, the all sufficient authority in matters of faith, doctrine, and Christian living.
- 2) We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good. We believe that the inability which the scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin. And, to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the Holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.
- 3) We believe there is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.
- 4) We believe in the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, and that He is true God and man. He died on the cross for our sins. He rose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father and is now our High Priest and Advocate.
- 5) We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin, and therefore lost. Only through regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit can man's salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
- 6) We believe that eternal salvation is the free gift of God, entirely apart from man's works, and is possessed by any and all who have faith in and receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. This is the elective grace of God, in that He did predestine us to be conformed to the image of his Son, to be called, justified, and glorified, that none should perish but have eternal life. Salvation means the believer is saved from the penalty of their sins because their sins have been forgiven and cleansed by the blood sacrifice of Jesus and have been forgotten according to God's Word. No sin is beyond the pardon offered through Jesus Christ other than one's refusal of the call of the Holy Spirit to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

7) We believe in a regenerated church membership: that is, persons old enough to understand their need for Jesus Christ and, of their own free will, accepted Him as their personal Lord and Savior.

8) We believe that Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper is a memorial to His suffering and death on the cross. These are ordinances to be observed by the church in its present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means for man's salvation.

9) We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath.

10) We believe in the personal, bodily, imminent, and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ and that His Second Coming inspires believers for dynamic and zealous life and service for Him while waiting for His return. We believe that the return of our Lord will be in two phases: Phase 1 – For His church, Phase II – With His church.

11) We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead; that the dead in Christ will rise first, then those who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. After the judgements of God upon this sinful world in the Great Tribulation, Jesus our Lord will come with His saints to establish His kingdom. Christ will judge all men in righteousness. We believe in the everlasting blessedness of the saved in heaven; and the everlasting punishment and separation from God of the unsaved in hell.

12) We believe in the autonomy of the local church. The church shall manage its own affairs and shall not be subject to any other religious body or organization.

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

14) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, polygamy, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-20; I Cor. 5:1, 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4) We believe that the only scriptural marriage is the joining of one natural-born man and one natural-born woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

15) We subscribe to the "Baptist Faith and Message" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, first in 1925 with revisions adopted in 1963, 1998, and 2000, as our larger statement of faith with scriptural references. We do hereby make this document an attachment of our above-stated Articles of Faith.

BYLAWS

I. Church Membership

A. General: Bethlehem Baptist Church is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this Church.

B. Qualifications: Membership of Bethlehem Baptist Church shall consist of people who have made a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who, having been scripturally baptized by immersion, are in agreement with the Articles of Faith and Covenant of this church, have been approved by the congregation, and are listed on the membership roll.

C. Reception: Membership in the church may be attained by majority vote of the church in any of its meetings and in one of the following manners:

1. By scriptural baptism by immersion after profession of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.
2. By transfer of church letter from another Baptist church.
3. By a statement of faith of their prior experience of conversion and scriptural baptism by immersion in another evangelical church of like faith and practice.
4. By restoration to the church membership after having been dropped as provided in the church discipline.
5. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of those Church members present (having a required quorum) and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership. Any dissent shall be resolved according to the church discipline.

D. Responsibility:

1. Members should learn and understand the privileges and responsibilities to God and the church.
2. It shall be the duty of church members to uphold and live by the Articles of Faith, Constitution and Bylaws, and Covenant of the Church
3. Members should discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual gifts in the ministries of the Church.
4. Members must be faithful in attendance to worship services and Bible study.
5. Members should make a commitment to be a student of the Word of God, a person of prayer, and personal evangelism and discipleship.
6. Members should be encouraged in scriptural stewardship of time, talents, and tithes and offerings.
7. Members in good standing shall have the right to a voice and vote in all church transactions. Only Active Members of Bethlehem Baptist Church are entitled to voting rights. Members must be present to vote.
8. Members shall have the right and privileges to full participation in the life and work of the church, as provided for in the Bylaws.

E. Termination: Membership in this church shall be terminated when a member:

1. Requests a letter of transfer to join another Baptist church.
2. Is dropped from the roll of membership when he or she joins another kind of church. A letter of transfer is not necessary.
3. Dies

4. Is dismissed by a vote of the church due to reasons and circumstances provided in the church discipline. The pastor and deacons will do all they can to counsel the member for restoration prior to action of dismissal.

* Regular inactivity for one (1) year shall automatically remove oneself from Active Membership unless homebound or a shut-in.

NOTE: Letters of dismissal shall be granted only to other churches of like faith and order. Letters will not be granted to individual members requesting termination of their membership.

II. Church Officers

All church officers must be members of the church in good standing.

A. The Pastor:

1. The qualifications for pastor shall be consistent with those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. His training, skills, and experiences are needed in this area of leadership.
2. The pastor, having given evidence of his Spiritual calling and Biblical compliance to preach and fill the office of Pastor, shall also meet the Biblical qualifications for deacon as outlined in this document.
3. The pastor is responsible for leading Bethlehem Baptist Church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor is the under-shepherd of Bethlehem Baptist Church in divine worship, aggressive evangelism, deliberate discipleship, and compassionate ministry.

1. His responsibilities:

- (a) These generally fall into the following areas: Preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, administration, planning, and guiding the church to grow and fulfill its purposes.
- (b) He shall lead the church, the organizations, and all leaders of the church in performing their tasks in worship, proclamation, education, and evangelism.
- (c) The pastor shall be an ex officio member of all church standing committees, except the Pastor Selection Committee.
- (d) The pastor will counsel the Deacon Board and be responsible to Bethlehem Baptist Church.
- (e) He shall, in collaboration with the deacons, secure pulpit supply for times in his absence and secure evangelists for special services

2. Call:

- (a) A pastor shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs.
- (b) A Pastor Selection Committee shall be appointed by the deacons and/or the church to seek out a suitable pastor and this committee's recommendation will serve as a nomination.
- (c) The Pastor Selection Committee will recommend only one candidate at a time.
- (d) The pastor's election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least a one-week notice shall be given to the members.
- (e) The election shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative majority vote of three-fourths (3/4) quorum of those present being necessary for the call as pastor.

3. Terms of Service:

- (a) There shall be a written mutual contract/agreement made between the pastor and the church.
- (b) The chosen pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by either his request or that of the church. In either case, at least sixty (60) days' notice shall be given unless otherwise mutually agreed.
- (c) Under the situation that termination of the relationship is determined by Bethlehem Baptist Church to be necessary by means of declaration that the position of the pastor be vacated, a meeting shall be called for that purpose, of which the membership has been given a two week's written notice. The meeting may be called upon recommendation by the deacons. The Associational Missionary shall preside at this meeting. If the Associational Missionary is unavailable, the Church Clerk shall preside at the meeting until a member other than the pastor shall be elected to preside at the meeting. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot. A quorum of at least 51% of the church membership eligible to vote as provided in the church membership voting rights, must be present in order to declare the office of pastor vacant. An affirmative majority vote of the members present shall be necessary to declare the office vacant. If the membership votes the office vacant, the termination of pastoral duties shall be effective immediately upon publication of the results of the vote.
- (d) Any written contracts/agreements entered into between Bethlehem Baptist Church and pastor shall be honored by the church, regardless of the nature of the termination of the relationship.

B. Church Staff: This church shall employ or call staff, as it shall need.

1. Staff members other than that of the pastor shall be recommended for employment by the deacon board, pastor, or a special committee in any of its regular business meetings and appointed by majority vote of a required quorum.

2. A written job description and mutual contract/agreement will be prepared when the need for church staff is determined.

C. Deacons:

A deacon shall demonstrate an exemplary Christian testimony in private, family, and public life.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of Bethlehem Baptist Church.

The task of the deacon is to be a committed Christian leader and partner of the pastor; to care for church members and other persons in the community; lead Bethlehem Baptist Church to achieve its mission; to be a supporter and promoter of the church faith, practice, programs, and ministries.

There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to Bethlehem Baptist Church from another church where he has served as a deacon.

A deacon at Bethlehem Baptist Church shall serve until such time as they desire to become inactive, or as provided in the church discipline.

1. Qualifications:

- (a) A church deacon must meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- (b) He must be born again of the Spirit of God and willing to give and live his Christian testimony before the church membership and the world.
- (c) He must believe that the Bible is the infallible, inerrant Word of God, and subscribe to the Church Covenant, Articles of Faith, and By-Laws of Bethlehem Baptist Church.
- (d) He must believe that it is the obligation of every Christian to be a personal soul winner and the lead Bethlehem Baptist Church in outreach.
- (e) He must believe that it is the obligation of every Christian to obey the Great Commission as found in Matthew 28:19-20.
- (f) He must believe in and practice tithing as a minimum expression of our love for God through the church.
- (g) He must not have any serious domestic troubles and not have been divorced. He must know how to rule his own home well before becoming a leader in the church.
- (h) He must know, along with his wife, how to hold their tongues against spreading gossip or talking critically about others.
- (i) He must not be involved in gambling.
- (j) He must handle his own business affairs in a way that is above reproach, possessing a good name among the people of his community.
- (k) He must abstain totally from the use of intoxicating substances. A deacon should neither sell, nor be involved in the sales of intoxicating substances. He should neither serve nor allow intoxicating substances to be served in his home.
- (l) He must have a teachable spirit to learn and apply the Scriptures to his life.
- (m) He must try to put down murmuring and complaining as he would smother a fire, facing them frankly, dealing with them fairly and stand loyally with the majority of Bethlehem Baptist Church in their decisions.
- (n) He must be willing to serve when needed, to the best of his ability. He should be willing to work at an assigned task conscientiously, and if he is unable to carry out the assignment, will so indicate and resign the responsibility. He shall resign as a deacon if he cannot or will not carry out his responsibilities as an elected deacon.
- (o) He must regularly attend the service of Bethlehem Baptist Church, supporting them with his good will, presence, prayers, and contributions .
- (p) He must keep the observance of the Lord's Day above reproach.
- (q) He must be an active member of Bethlehem Baptist Church, and be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- (r) He must have been a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church for at least one (1) year before becoming a deacon.

2. Election:

(a) The Deacon Board will enlist active church men to be considered by the Board. The duties, qualifications, and importance of the office of a deacon will be interpreted to the candidate(s), and said candidate(s) will be reviewed for final recommendation by the Board to the church during a named church business meeting.

3. Ordination:

(a) Selection, election, and ordination of deacons is a privilege of the local church.

(b) When ordination of deacon(s) is planned by the church, it shall authorize the pastor to assemble a council to examine the candidate(s) concerning their fit to serve as deacons.

(c) The council directed to examine the deacons shall be composed of the pastor, invited ordained pastors, and deacons of neighboring sister Baptist churches or as composed and agreed upon by pastor and Deacon board.

(d) When the council recommends the ordination of deacon(s), the ordination service shall be scheduled as led by the pastor.

4. Duties:

a. Elected deacons shall elect the chairman of their board.

b. Deacons serve as a board of counsel to assist the pastor concerning the progress and welfare of the church.

c. Assist the pastor in ministering to the members.

d. Seek to solve any fellowship problem of the church.

e. Assist the pastor in administering the church ordinances.

f. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of the Deacons Board shall serve as an advisory member to all organizations, departments, and committees of the church.

D. Moderator:

1. The church moderator may be the pastor or a lay leader elected to this position.

2. The moderator shall preside at all regular and called business meetings of the church.

3. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside over the regular and called business meetings of the church.

4. In the absence of the moderator and the chairman of deacons, the church clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator will be elected.

E. Clerk:

1. The church clerk shall be elected and be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all business meeting transactions of the church and preparing the annual report to the association.

2. He or she shall keep a register of the names and addresses of the church members, with dates of admission, dismissal, baptisms, and deaths of members.

3. He or she shall issue letters of dismissal and write letters of transfer of membership as voted by the church, prepare written reports of the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and keep an accurate history of the church.

F. Treasurer:

1. The church treasurer shall be elected as the custodian of all monies of the church and shall disburse these monies by checks as authorized by the church.
2. He or she shall keep, at all times, an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements and shall render a monthly and annually written report of this account to the church.
3. The treasurer shall be responsible for seeing that the offerings are properly received, counted, documented, and deposited in the church's bank account within 5 days of receipt.
4. He or she shall properly credit each contributor and their offerings.
5. He or she shall be responsible for preparing and mailing an annual record of contribution to donors by January 30th.

G. Finance / Audit Committee:

1. The finance / audit committee shall be elected and pledge to be true fiduciaries and overseers of the church's finances. The committee shall consist of the Pastor, Deacons, the Church Treasurer, and the Assistant to the Treasurer.
2. The finance / audit committee shall appoint an independent auditor to perform an annual audit or agreed upon procedures of the treasurer's report and the financial internal controls currently in place that provide an appropriate level of assurance that the finance committee has fulfilled their roles as true fiduciaries and overseers of the church's finances.

I. Vacancies:

In case of vacancy in any office, except that of the pastor and deacons, the vacancy shall be filled by the church at a regular or special meeting as soon as possible after such vacancy has occurred.

III. Church Committees

Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee shall be responsible throughout the year for nominating and presenting to the church (unless provided for otherwise in these Bylaws) people to serve in various positions of the church that are vacated by expiration of term of office, by death, by resignation, or by removal. Each person placed in a position shall be informed of his or her responsibilities.

All church committee members shall be elected by the church from nominations presented by the Nominating Committee and/or nominations from the floor, with the consent of the nominee. There shall be a minimum of three (3) members within a committee, with a chairperson elected either by the committee or through church nomination and vote. Any

committee member elected to fill a vacancy shall serve the unexpired term of the vacated position.

Church Council:

1. The Church Council shall have as regular members the pastor, clerk, treasurer, chairman of deacons, Sunday School director/secretary, chairperson of each church standing committee, leaders/directors of men's, women's, and student ministries.
2. The Council shall hold quarterly (or) semi-annual meetings for planning purposes.
3. The Church Council shall be charged with making recommendations to the church of their objectives and goals; review the coordinated program plans presented by the pastor, church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.
4. All matters agreed on by the Church Council calling for action not already provided for shall be referred to the church to be voted upon.

Other committees may be formed as needed by the church.

IV. Church Ministries

- A. Current church ministries were last established in October 2010. These ministries are:**
- Sunday School/Outreach Ministries** – Sunday School: secretary, elected teachers, substitute teacher pool; Outreach/Visitation Team; Homebound Ministry Team
- Music/Performing Arts Ministries** – director, assistant, pianist, assistant pianists, adult choir, children/youth choir, sound/lighting technician, camera/video technician, computer technician
- Discipleship Ministries** – Vacation Bible School
- Ordinance Ministries** – Baptism Assist Team; Lord's Supper Team
- Nursery/Preschool Ministries** – Morning Worship Service Nursery, nursery coordinator, nursery workers
- Student Ministries** – coordinator, workers, special event assistants and chaperones, recreation workers
- Missions Ministries** – WMU: director; Special Missions Projects Team; Nursing Home Team; Children's Homes Team; Bereavement/Special Needs Team
- Fellowships/Events Ministries:** coordinator; workers: design/decoration, setup/arrangement, food prep/cook/grill, serving, cleanup
- Intercessory Prayer Ministries** – prayer group leader, group participants
- Building and Grounds Ministries** – Building/Grounds Maintenance Team
- Welcome/Hospitality Ministries** – Greeter/Usher Team; Correspondence Team; Florals Team
- Information/Public Relations Ministries** – Church Bulletins; Bulletin Boards/Graphics/Artwork/ Banners Team; Computer/Website Team; Journalism/Newsletter Team
- Prison Ministries** – Bible Study Leader; Care Boxes Team; Literature Team

Associational Ministries – Executive Committee Representative; Associational Meetings Representatives

- B. Other ministries** may be formed as needed by the church.

V. Church Meetings

A. Worship Services: The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning for the worship of God, for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and on Wednesday night, designated for prayer and Bible study. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all other people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor or designated church officer in the absence of the pastor.

B. Regular Business Meetings: Regular business meetings shall be held on every Wednesday following the first Sunday of the month.

*All expenditures **exceeding** \$500.00 must be pre-approved during regular business meetings.

Any expenditures less than \$500.00 should be pre-approved by the Deacons or church council.

C. Special Business Meeting: A special called business meeting may be called by the pastor, and with other church officers, or by action of the church to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week written notice or announcement must be given for the specially called business meeting.

D. Quorum: The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called. At least one-fourth (1/4) of the active membership shall constitute a quorum, or as provided for otherwise in the Bylaws.

E. Parliamentary Rules: *Robert's Rules of Order* (revised edition) is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church and for all other meetings that demand voting of the church members, including committee meetings. An edition of said rule book shall be kept in the church office for reference purposes.

VI. Licensing and Ordaining into the Gospel Ministry

A. Licensing: Any member of the church who has shown by his life and has felt the call to the gospel ministry may by vote of the membership at a regular meeting be licensed by the church to the Christian ministry.

B. Ordination: When a church of like faith and order shall have called as its pastor a member of this church who possesses scriptural qualifications and as demonstrated by his skills and training for ordination to the work of the gospel ministry, requests in writing that he be ordained, or the pastor and/or church board of deacons recommends him for ordination, a

special committee shall be elected to conduct the process of his ordination in like manner of afore-documented ordination of deacons.

If a licensed minister is called to serve at Bethlehem, but has not been ordained into the Gospel Ministry, an ordination will be conducted in like manner of afore-documented process of deacon ordination.

VII. Church Discipline

1. It shall be the basic purpose of Bethlehem Baptist Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Reconciliation, rather than punishment, should be the guideline that governs the attitude of one member toward another.

Should a serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of Bethlehem Baptist Church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and deacons to resolve the issue in accordance with Matthew 18:15-35, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, and 2 Corinthians 2:1-11. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by the spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. If it is determined that the welfare of the church will be best served by the exclusion of the member, Bethlehem Baptist Church may take this action by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, **by secret ballot**, of the members present (having the required quorum) at a meeting called for this purpose; and Bethlehem Baptist Church may proceed to declare the offender to no longer be in the membership of the church. Notice of this vote must be given during a regularly scheduled Sunday morning service following said announcement.

2. Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition, which has made it necessary for the church to exclude him/her, may upon his request be restored to membership by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, **by secret ballot**, of the members present (having the required quorum), at a meeting called for this purpose, upon evidence of his/her repentance and reformation. Notice of this vote must be given during a regularly scheduled Sunday morning service at the next regularly scheduled Sunday morning service following said announcement.

Amendment

This Constitution, Church Covenant, Articles of Faith, and Bylaws may be amended provided the proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing at a regular church business meeting and then circulated to the membership. Amendments shall be two-thirds (2/3) vote of members of the church who are qualified to vote and are present in the business meeting with a quorum to discuss and vote for this matter.

Ratified by action of Bethlehem Baptist Church in its business meeting on
Wednesday, December 9, 2020.

Moderator: Pastor Bill Strandberg

Church Clerk: Wanda Calhoun

Latest revisions: September 28, 2025

