

Constitution

and

Bylaws

Bethlehem Baptist Church

Adopted October 11, 1998

Definitions

Constitution - the act of constituting, making or establishing; the action of decreeing or ordaining; the way in which a thing is constituted or made up; the arrangement or combination of its parts or elements as determining its nature or character; the system or body of fundamental principles according to which a nation, state, or body politic is constituted and governed. (**Oxford English Dictionary**, 1971 edition, page 529.)

Bylaws - regulations, ordinances, rules or laws by an association or corporation or the like for its internal governance. (**Black's Law Dictionary**, 1991 edition, page 201).

Timeline for Presentation, Review, Revision and Adoption of Proposed Constitution and Bylaws

1. August 30, 1998 - distribute to deacons for study.
2. September 6, 1998 - review with deacons.
3. September 20 and 27, 1998 - distribute copies to congregation through Sunday School and church services.
4. Sunday, October 4, 1998 - entire evening service devoted to conference, presentation of proposed constitution and bylaws for clarification, discussion and revisions.
5. Sunday, October 11, 1998 - Presentation in a.m. service for adoption. Vote only "Yes" in favor, "No" not in favor.

To avoid confusion, please hold questions until time for discussion in conference. Recommendations for changes should be made in writing.

Church Bylaws Committee:

Rev. Furman Lewis, chair
Linda Jean Black
Carol Caldwell
Martha Holcomb
Carol Stribling
Danny Parker

Constitution of Bethlehem Baptist Church
624 Highway 197 North
Clarkesville, Georgia 30523

Preamble

In order to preserve the liberties of each individual member of this sovereign and democratic church, and to safeguard the freedom of action of this church in relation to other churches, the congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church does hereby establish this constitution and accompanying Bylaws. Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, Bethlehem Baptist Church retains unto itself all rights of exclusive self-government in all phases of spiritual and temporal life.

Article I
Name

This body shall be known as **Bethlehem Baptist Church of Clarkesville, Incorporated, 624 Highway 197 North, Clarkesville, Georgia, 30523**, located in the county of Habersham.

Article II
Statement of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statements contained within ***The Baptist Faith and Message*** as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963.

Article III
Relationships

Bethlehem Baptist Church is governed by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the church, as He shall reveal His leadership to us through the Word of God and through the Spirit of God. This church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation that are common among Southern Baptist churches. Insofar as it is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Habersham Baptist Association, the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article IV Mission Statement

Bethlehem Baptist Church is a fellowship of caring Christian people who have joined together as a body of believers under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit to fulfill the mission of the church, which is to:

Celebrate God's presence, through a Christian lifestyle and Christ-centered worship. (Hebrews 10:25; Ephesians 4:3-6)

Teach God's Word, by promoting spiritual growth through Bible study and discipleship opportunities. (John 8:31-32; II Timothy 2:15 and 3:16-17)

Communicate God's message, as we witness and share the Good news of salvation through Jesus Christ with others. (John 3:16-17; Acts 4:12)

Minister to God's creation, as we demonstrate God's love by meeting the spiritual, physical, and social needs of people within our church, community, and through the Cooperative ministries, around the world. (I John 4:7-12; Galatians 6:10; Luke 10:25-37)

In light of this mission, Bethlehem Baptist Church and its ministries will focus upon the following concerns and needs:

1. Reach the lost and fellow believers without a church home.
2. Develop believers as disciples.
3. Strengthen family relationships.
4. Promote Christian social values.
5. Provide adequate physical facilities.
6. Promote mission involvement.
7. Promote stewardship education.
8. Promote Christian fellowship.

Article V Covenant

We, the members of Bethlehem Baptist Church of Clarkesville, Georgia, 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 by immersion in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, enter into agreement with one another, as one body in Christ. Therefore, we, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Bible as our guides, hereby covenant together to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To walk together in Christian love.
2. To strive for the advancement of this church.
3. To promote Christian spirituality.
4. To sustain the worship, discipline and doctrinal integrity of the church.
5. To observe the church's ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper as authorized by our local church.
6. To contribute cheerfully and regularly of God's tithes and our offerings to the support of the ministry of this church, and to the spread of the Gospel to all nations.
7. To encourage personal and family devotions.
8. To educate our children according to our faith.
9. To seek the salvation of unbelievers.
10. To be just in our dealings, reliable in our responsibilities, and an example to those around us.
11. To abstain from the sale and use of alcohol, drugs and other substances harmful to our bodies, which are the temples of God.
12. To use our influence to combat the abuse of all such harmful substances.
13. To work unfailingly for the advancement of the Kingdom of the Savior by witnessing in words as well as in conduct.
14. To walk in Christian harmony and watchfulness, giving and receiving assistance with meekness and affection.
15. To pray for one another, and help one another in sickness and in sorrow.
16. To be slow to anger and to be always open and eager for reconciliation, seeking it without delay.
17. To agree that, if we move from this area, that we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Article VI Amendments

Changes in this constitution may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided that copies of each proposed amendment have been presented in writing at the previous regular business meeting; that a written copy of each proposed amendment has been published at least twice in the weekly church newsletter prior to being voted upon; and that written copies of each proposed amendment have been made available in the church office to the membership of the church.

Amendments shall be passed and become effective by a **two-thirds** vote of all members of the church present and voting at the time at which amendments are proposed.

Article VII Adoption

Section One - This constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when **two-thirds** of the members present and voting at the business meeting at which the vote is taken to adopt the constitution, shall vote in favor of adoption. This vote shall be taken not less than thirty (30) days after formal presentation of the constitution to the church.

Section Two - Once adopted, this constitution will abolish, supersede and replace any constitution that preceded it.

Section Three - A copy of this constitution shall be kept in the church office. All amendments and revisions to this constitution, after passage by church vote, shall be prepared by the church clerk and incorporated into the constitution. The constitution and all amendments and revisions thereof shall be made available to church members upon request.

Adopted by Bethlehem Baptist Church of Clarkesville, Georgia, on October 11, 1998.

Bylaws
Bethlehem Baptist Church
624 Highway 197 North
Clarkesville, Georgia 30523

Article I
Membership

Section One - Reception into Membership

A person may be received for membership into the church through general affirmation of the church body upon a motion to accept and a second by church members to accept a prospective member, and by any one of the following ways:

1. **By profession of faith.** A person publicly professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a regenerate heart and adopting the covenant and the articles of faith and practice held by the church, shall upon baptism be admitted into the fellowship of the church.
2. **By statement.** Any person who has been baptized upon profession of faith in a Southern Baptist church but who, because of loss of records or similarly unavoidable circumstances, has no regular letter of dismissal, may be received into membership after giving satisfactory evidence of a regenerate heart, Christian conduct and scriptural faith. Any person presented for membership who has been baptized by immersion in a Southern Baptist church of like faith and order shall be received by statement.
3. **By letter.** Any person from another Baptist church of like faith and practice may be received into membership upon receipt of letter of transfer by Bethlehem Baptist Church from the respective church.
4. **By baptism by other churches.**
 - a. Acceptance of “alien immersion” is determined by the purpose or meaning of baptism, not by denominational affiliation. Biblical baptism, as taught in scripture, is a personal act acknowledging obedience to and faith in Jesus Christ under the authority of the New Testament church.
 - b. According to the New Testament qualifications in uniting with the church, evidence of accepting Christ as Savior and Lord, and believer’s baptism are necessary without a requirement of denominational affiliation.

Section Two - New Member Orientation

New church members will be expected to participate in the church’s new member orientation program as it is maintained and conducted by the church staff.

Section Three - Rights of Members

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and upon all questions submitted to the church in conference. Members must be present to vote; voting by proxy is prohibited.

Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership for the elective offices of the church. Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

Section Four - Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: death of the member; transfer by letter to another Southern Baptist church of similar faith and order; acknowledgement when a member has joined another faith and order and has requested termination of membership in Bethlehem Baptist Church; or exclusion from membership by an action of the church.

Article II Church Staff and Officers

The officers of the church shall include the following.

- A. Pastor** - a pastor or interim pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The call of the pastor shall take place at a meeting especially called for that purpose. A letter of announcement of the meeting and its purpose must be given to all church families, and an announcement made in at least two church meetings, no less than one week prior to the meeting to call a pastor.

Pastoral Responsibilities - the pastor shall be charged with the oversight and care for the general welfare of the church. He shall be *ex-officio* a member of the Church deacons, and of all committees and church organizations. He is empowered to convene special meetings of the Church deacons, committees and church organizations as he may deem appropriate. He shall conduct religious services, administer church ordinances, and minister to the church body and to the community. He shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church, and arrange for workers to assist in revival and other special services, programs and meetings of the church. The pastor serves as administrative leader of the church, and as such provides direct supervision for the other members of the pastoral staff.

Procedure for Calling a Pastor -

1. The church's Personnel Committee will nominate a "Pastor Search Committee" of no more than seven (7) church members within thirty (30) days of a pastoral vacancy. This committee's nominees will be representative of the various organizations of the church and of the membership at large.
2. Nominations to this committee will be referred to the church membership for confirmation under the rules of procedure as provided for under **Article III** of these Bylaws. It will be the option of the church membership to elect the slate as submitted, or to make additional nominations from the floor. A committee of no more than seven members shall be elected.
3. The "Pastor Search Committee" will elect its own officers. The chairman of the Personnel Committee will convene the initial meeting and serve as chair until the committee elects officers.
4. It is the responsibility of the "Pastor Search Committee" to recommend to the church the most suitable person available for this position. This committee will be responsible for obtaining information about all candidates regarding education, experience, doctrinal beliefs and spirituality.
5. The "Pastor Search Committee", in consultation with the Personnel and Finance Committees of the church, will recommend salary and benefits for the newly called pastor to the church membership for approval.
6. A candidate for a call will be invited to the church for a weekend. He will meet with the deacons and other leaders of the church, deliver a sermon to the church membership, and attend a fellowship that will afford church members the opportunity to meet with him and his family. The following Sunday the church will meet in church conference in which a ballot vote will be taken to call or abstain from calling the candidate. An affirmative vote of eight-five percent (85%) of the membership present in the church conference is required to constitute a call.

Procedure for Dismissal of a Pastor -

1. The church may declare the office of pastor vacant at a church conference or meeting called for that purpose, provided that the provisions for calling such meetings as set forth in these Bylaws are met. Before steps to dismiss a pastor are initiated, the chairman of the deacons and at least one other serving deacon will meet with the pastor to discuss any causes for disagreement, in attempt to bring about reconciliation and resolution between the pastor and the body of the church.
2. Should reconciliation between the pastor and the church be unachievable, a conference or meeting for the purpose of dismissal of the pastor will be called upon recommendation of two-thirds (2/3) of the deacons, or receipt and review of a written petition presented

to the church clerk and signed by not less than one-fourth (1/4) of the resident members of the church.

3. The vote to declare the office vacant will be conducted by written, secret ballot by members present at the church conference or meeting at which the issue of dismissal of the pastor is deliberated. A majority vote (over 50.0 percent) is required for dismissal.
4. Compensation, if any, for the dismissed pastor will be recommended to the church by the Personnel Committee not less than two weeks after the church has voted for dismissal.

B. Deacons - The Scriptural basis, qualifications and instruction for the Church deacons is in accordance with the teachings found in Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons are expected to set a consistent example, both within and without the church body, in terms of faithfulness, stewardship, ministry, witnessing and fulfillment of their covenant obligations.

The role of the deacon is that of servant, as recognized in the root meaning of the Greek word "*Diakonos*" (servant).

1. Number of Deacons -
The active deacon body shall consist of such number as the deacon body, as approved by the church, shall from time to time deem necessary to fulfill the duties of the body.
2. Nomination and ordination -
 - a. Any church member may nominate qualified men who have not been previously ordained for the office of deacon. Men nominated must be qualified for the office according to the precepts of New Testament scripture. Men nominated should be at least twenty-five (25) years of age and a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church for at least two (2) years.
 - b. Individuals wishing to nominate a candidate for ordination must first contact that person to ensure that he is desirous of and wishing to serve. A statement signed by both individuals indicating that such contact has been made and that the candidate is willing that his name be placed in nomination must be submitted to the deacon chairman, pastor, or to the church office.
 - c. The chairman of the deacons or the pastor and at least one other ordained deacon shall interview the candidate for nomination. The interview should certify that the candidate is qualified to serve in the office of deacon as defined in the deacon policy, and is willing to accept and carry out those responsibilities and has served a training period of not less than six months.
 - d. The names of persons so nominated, examined and found qualified shall be presented for election at the next appropriate church conference.

3. Election -
 - a. Candidates for election shall consist of all ordained deacons who have been a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church for a minimum of two (2) years who are not presently serving, and men who have been nominated according to church policy.
 - b. Voting shall be by secret ballot. The candidate shall be elected by a 2/3 majority of those present and voting.
 - c. The active deacon body shall select the chairman of deacons from among its membership.
 4. Procedure for Dismissal -
 - a. Same as for pastor. See Paragraph 1 and 2.
 - b. Any active deacon can have his name removed from the active deacon roll by presenting a request to the church at any regular scheduled church conference.
- C. Pastoral Staff** - The pastoral staff will share leadership, teaching and other ministries with the pastor. They have general oversight duties and will serve in such program areas as their gifts shall allow.

Personnel Committee - the Personnel Committee of Bethlehem Baptist Church, working with the pastor, will study the need for church staff members, prepare job descriptions for all staff members, and recommend the filling of positions by the church. This committee will conduct an annual review of salaries and benefits for all church employees, and make recommendations for salaries and benefits to the church's Finance Committee.

Procedures for Calling a Member of the Pastoral Staff -

1. The Personnel Committee shall nominate a "Search Committee" of not more than seven resident members of the church. The church in conference shall have the option of electing those nominated by the Personnel Committee, or offering additional nominations in accordance with parliamentary procedure.
2. The "Search Committee" will elect its own officers. The chairman of the Personnel Committee will convene the first meeting and serve as chair until the committee elects its own chairperson.
3. The committee will solicit and review résumés, and present their recommendations to the pastor.
4. The pastor will interview the candidate(s), and recommend his choice to the committee.
5. Upon recommendation of the pastor and the committee, the candidate will be invited to the church for a weekend. The candidate will meet with the deacons and other leaders of the church, and attend a fellowship to which the church membership will be invited to meet the candidate.
6. In accordance with the stipulations of these Bylaws, the church will then meet in conference, and a ballot vote will be taken on whether

or not to call the candidate. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the membership present during the conference is required to constitute a call.

Procedures for Dismissal of a Member of the Pastoral Staff -

1. The church may dismiss a member of the pastoral staff in a church conference or meeting called in accordance with these Bylaws.
2. Before steps to dismiss a member of the pastoral staff are initiated, the chairman of the deacons and at least one other serving deacon will meet with the pastor to discuss any causes for disagreement, in attempt to bring about reconciliation and resolution between the pastoral staff member and the body of the church. The pastor, chairman of the deacons and at least one other serving deacon will then meet with the member of the pastoral staff in attempt to bring about reconciliation.
3. The motion to dismiss a member of the pastoral staff will come upon the recommendation of the pastor and appropriate church committees.

OR

4. Upon the recommendation of a majority of the deacons or receipt and review of a written petition signed by not less than one-fourth (1/4) of resident church members. The written petition shall be presented to the church clerk.
5. The vote for dismissal will take place by secret ballot. A majority of ballots cast (over 50.0 percent) is required for dismissal.

- D. Non-pastoral Staff** - Non-pastoral staff are those who support the on-going ministry in a non-pastoral capacity. Examples of non-pastoral staff include secretaries, custodian, etc. New non-pastoral staff positions may be created as needed by vote of the church upon a recommendation from appropriate staff and committees to the Personnel Committee.

Procedures for Hiring and/or Dismissal of a Non-pastoral Staff -

1. Non-pastoral staff members shall be employed by the church as the church determines the need for their services upon the recommendation of the Personnel Committee after consultation with the pastor and any other appropriate staff member or members.
2. The Personnel Committee shall have the authority to employ or to terminate the services of non-pastoral staff members.
3. Such employment or termination of services shall occur only after consultation with the pastor, the supervising staff member, and where appropriate, with the chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee and any other committee or committees of the church.

- E. Clerk** - the clerk of the church shall be selected annually by the church body or a committee especially designated by the church to perform the selection of the clerk. The duties of the clerk include but are not limited to the following:

1. The clerk shall keep appropriate records of all of the formal actions of the church.
2. The clerk is responsible for keeping a register containing the names of members, with dates of admission and dates of termination of membership, as well as a record of baptisms.
3. The clerk shall issue any letters of exclusion from membership as voted upon by the church body, as well as any official letters dealing with termination of employment of church officers and/or staff.
4. The clerk shall give legal notice of all church meetings wherein such legal notice is necessary and appropriate.
5. The clerk is responsible for the oversight and safekeeping of official church records. Such oversight and safekeeping may be delegated to the church secretary as is deemed prudent and appropriate.

F. Moderator - The moderator or his or her designee will preside at all church conferences.

G. Treasurer - The treasurer will work with the Finance Committee to ensure the following:

1. Proper preparation of the work plans budget at the beginning of each new fiscal year.
2. Counting personnel are following established procedures in ensuring the accurate accounting of individual contributions.
3. Division of funds as designated for internal control.
4. Physical safety of deposits.
5. Report to the congregation of the financial condition of the church at each church conference.

Additionally, the treasurer will ensure that the financial secretary is following prescribed procedures in recording and reporting all financial transactions as included in the financial secretary's job description. If a vacancy in the position of financial secretary should occur, the treasurer will work with the Personnel Committee to secure a replacement. The treasurer will serve on the Finance Committee, and sign checks as required in the absence of the financial secretary.

H. Trustees - Trustees elected by the church will hold the church property in trust. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property without a specific vote of the church membership authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signature to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging, rental or purchase of property, or any other legal documents whereupon the signatures of the trustees are required. These responsibilities shall involve no personal liability on the part of the trustees.

- I. **Parliamentarian** - The parliamentarian shall rule on any question of parliamentary procedure during a church conference or meeting.

Article III Church Meetings

Section One - Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, each Sunday evening, and each Wednesday evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism and the worship of the Lord. Should circumstances, such as inclement weather, so necessitate, the pastor and/or church staff and the chairman of the deacons may stipulate cancellation or re-scheduling of services.

Worship services shall be open to everyone and shall be directed and under the general supervision of the pastor.

Section Two - Special Services

All church services that are essential to the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be placed on the church calendar, published in the church newsletter at least one (1) week before the meeting is held, and announced at all services on the Sunday prior to the conducting of the special service.

Section Three - Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held on the first Sunday of the last month of each quarter. Matters requiring a vote must be publicized as outlined in "Section Two" immediately preceding this section.

For purposes of meeting the requirements of the non-profit corporation code of the state of Georgia, the business meeting of the first quarter of the church year shall be designated as the church's "annual meeting," at which church members who are designated as "president" and "treasurer" of the church's "corporate board directors" shall report on church activities and the financial condition of the church.

Section Four - Special Business Meetings

A business meeting called for a special, specific purpose may be held to deliberate matters affecting the church. Notice of the subject, date and time, and the specific location of the special business meeting must be published in the church newsletter at least ten calendar days before the meeting and announced at all services the Sunday prior to the meeting.

Section Five - Quorum

A quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided the meeting has been called in accordance with the requirements of these Bylaws.

Section Six - Rules of Procedure

The most recent edition of ***Robert's Rules of Order*** shall be the authority for rules of procedure during church business meetings. Questions regarding rules of procedure during business meetings will be referred to the church parliamentarian for resolution through consulting ***Robert's Rules***, the church constitution, and its Bylaws.

Article IV Ordinances

Section One - Baptism

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. (Source: ***Baptist Faith and Message.***)

1. The purpose of Believer's Baptism -
 - a. Baptism does not save, nor does it help to save. It is not a condition of salvation, nor the remission of sin.
 - b. Baptism symbolizes a salvation that comes to us by faith in Jesus Christ. It pictures the inner cleansing that comes to the heart through the atoning work of Christ.
 - c. Baptism symbolizes our death to sin and our resurrection to a new life that comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through baptism we personally acknowledge and identify with Christ's crucifixion and resurrection on our behalf.
 - d. Baptism is the means by which we identify and unite with the church as God's people in the world. Baptism is a means of expressing a commitment to unite with the church in joining with God in His redemptive mission in the world. It acknowledges our acceptance of both the privileges and the responsibilities of being a member of the church as the Body of Christ.
2. The Mode of Baptism -
 - a. Immersion is described in the New Testament as the mode of baptism.

- b. The Greek verb translated as “baptize” means to dip or immerse.
 - c. The significance of the ordinance as identifying with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is most accurately portrayed through immersion.
- 3. The Candidate for Baptism -
 - a. The only persons who qualify for baptism are those who have heard the Gospel, have accepted its truth concerning Jesus Christ, and, through an intentional and decisive act, have received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
 - b. The reason for being baptized is to obey the command of Christ to be baptized and to acknowledge the atoning work of Christ that has already taken place.
- 4. The Authority to Baptize -
 - a. The authority to baptize rests with the local church.
 - b. The administrator of baptism is determined by the local congregation that designates who will perform baptism on behalf of the church.
- 5. The Acceptance of Baptism by Other Churches -
 - a. Acceptance of “alien immersion” is determined by the purpose or meaning of baptism, not by denominational affiliation. Biblical baptism, as taught in Scripture, is a personal act acknowledging obedience to and faith in Jesus Christ under the authority of a New Testament church.
 - b. According to the New Testament qualifications in uniting with the church, evidence of accepting Christ as Savior and Lord, and believer’s baptism are necessary without a requirement of denominational affiliation.

(Scriptural guidelines: Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-47; 8:36-38; 9:17-18; 15:8-11; 16:30-34; Romans 6:3-4; 10:9-10; I Corinthians 12:18; 16:10-11; and Ephesians 2:8-10)

Section Two - The Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.

1. The Lord’s Supper shall be observed at least quarterly, preferably on the first Sunday of each church quarter.
2. The pastor, church staff, the church deacons and the Lord’s Supper Committee shall be responsible for the planning for and administration of the Lord’s Supper.

Article V
Program Organizations

All programs of the church shall be under the control of the church body. All program officers will be elected by the church body, to whom these officers will report on a regular basis regarding program activities and outcomes.

Section One - Sunday School

Section Two - Discipleship Training

Section Three - Women's Missionary Union

Section Four - Baptist Men

Section Five - Music Ministry

Section Six - Senior Adult Ministry

Article VI
Church Ministries

The church shall plan for and organize for such ministries as it deems necessary. All ministries are subject to the oversight, control and evaluation of the Church Council and the church body.

Article VII Church Committees

The church shall create and elect such committees as it deems necessary. All committee members must be members of the church and serve on a rotating basis for periods of time as determined by the church body. Church committees shall serve on a calendar year (January 1st through December 31st) basis.

The following list reflects the standing committees of the church:

1. Baptismal
2. Benevolence
3. Bereavement
4. Building and Planning
5. Building and Property Maintenance
6. Building Usage
7. Cemetery
8. Church Hostess
9. Community Awareness
10. Disaster Response
11. Electronic Media
12. Fellowship
13. Finance
14. Flower
15. Fran Stapleton After-School Care Program
16. Insurance
17. Kitchen
18. Library
19. Lord's Supper
20. Missions Development Council
21. Music Council
22. New Member Orientation
23. Nominating
24. Nursery
25. Personnel
26. Prayer Coordinators
27. Publicity
28. Pulpit Supply
29. Recreation Activity
30. Resource Room
31. Sharing and Caring
32. Transportation
33. Trustees
34. Ushers
35. Worship
36. Youth Ministry Council

Article VIII Church Council

The Church Council serves as the administrative body of the church. It shall meet regularly to schedule and coordinate the work of the church.

The Church Council shall consist of church members holding the following positions:

1. Pastor - Chair
2. Church Staff
3. WMU Director
4. Baptist Men's Director
5. Sunday School Director
6. Discipleship Training Director
7. Senior Adult Ministry Coordinator
8. Chairman of Deacons
9. All Committee Chairpersons

Other special committees shall be created from time to time as the need arises. The church body shall be asked to approve creation of special committees through the venue of regular or special business meetings as outlined above in **Article III, Sections Three and Four** of these Bylaws.

Article IX Church Fiscal Year and Church Program Year

The fiscal year of the church shall be January 1st to December 31st. The church program year shall be from September 1st to August 31st.

Article X Church Planning and Budgeting

The church's Finance Committee shall work in cooperation with program directors and church committees to prepare annual plans and to submit annual budget requests to the church. The Finance Committee is also responsible for the general supervision of the administration of the church's financial resources.

Membership in Bethlehem Baptist Church involves acceptance of the obligations of Christian stewardship. Therefore, each new member shall be provided a copy of the current church budget, offering envelopes, the church's "Constitution and Bylaws," and other information pertinent to the conduct of proper stewardship as a member of the church body.

Article XI Church Discipline

It is the nature of any church body that, from time to time, differences will arise among members. Should such an unpleasant circumstance arise within the body of Bethlehem Baptist Church, members are urged to adhere to the teachings of the Lord contained in Matthew 18:15-17:

If your brother commits a sin, go and take the matter up with him, strictly between yourselves, and if he listens to you, you have won your brother over. If he will not listen, take one or two others with you, so that all facts may be duly established on the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, report the matter to the congregation; and if he will not listen even to the congregation, you must then treat him as you would a pagan or a tax-gatherer.

Should a member commit a gross breach of the church's covenant, or should a public scandal occur involving a church member, the church deacons shall act together in attempt to remove the cause of scandal. If this effort fails, the deacons shall report the case to the church body.

All proceedings of church discipline shall take place in the spirit of Christian love, kindness and forbearance, in full awareness of the standard of forgiveness established by our Lord in Matthew 18:22. If, however, an adverse decision is reached by the church body, the church may proceed to admonish the offender, and if need be, to declare that the offender is no longer a member of the church. The rules of procedure as established within these Bylaws governing business meetings (**Article III, Sections Three and Four**) shall prevail in matters concerning implementation of church discipline.

Any person whose membership has been terminated may be restored to full fellowship and membership in the church upon presentation of evidence of repentance or reformation.

Article XII Amendments

Amendments to the **Bylaws** of Bethlehem Baptist Church may be made at any regular or specially called business meeting of the church. Proposals for amendments must adhere to the following procedure:

1. All proposed amendments must have been presented in writing at the most recent business meeting or church conference.
2. A written copy of the proposed amendment or amendments must be published at least twice in the church's newsletter prior to being voted upon.

3. A written copy of the proposed amendment or amendments must be provided to each church member present at the business meeting or church conference at which the amendment or amendments will be voted upon.
4. No proposed amendment or amendments to the **Bylaws** shall be ratified or take effect until there has been a vote in favor of ratification by at least two-thirds (2/3) of all members present and voting at the business meeting or church conference at which the amendment or amendments are presented for approval.

Article XIII Adoption

Section One - These Bylaws shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when **two-thirds** of the members present and voting at the business meeting at which the vote is taken to adopt the constitution, shall vote in favor of adoption. This vote shall be taken not less than thirty (30) days after formal presentation of the constitution to the church.

Section Two - Once adopted, these Bylaws will abolish, supersede and replace all Bylaws that preceded them.

Section Three - A copy of these Bylaws shall be kept in the church office. All amendments and revisions to these Bylaws, after passage by church vote, shall be prepared by the church clerk and incorporated into the Bylaws of the church. The Bylaws, and all amendments and revisions thereof, shall be made available to church members upon request.

Adopted by Bethlehem Baptist Church of Clarkesville, Georgia, on October 11, 1998.