



Constitution and Bylaws

of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this church shall be BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH OF MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.

ARTICLE II

FOUNDATION, OBJECT AND PRIORITIES OF MINISTRY

1. The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11), and its code of guidance in all its affairs, the Word of God, and this Church does here affirm its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31).
2. The object of this Church shall be to worship God according to the teaching of His Word, to practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament, to sustain its ordinances and doctrines and to preach and propagate among all peoples the Gospel of Salvation which is by personal faith on Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
3. The priorities of ministry of this church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), strengthen the vision in nurture and education (I Corinthians 14:26; II Peter 3:18), and spread the vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (I Peter 2:9; 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20; 5:16).

AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH

I. THE WORD OF GOD

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20, 21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31, 32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

II. THE TRINITY

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the

work of creation, providence and redemption. Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, 3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19, 20; Ephesians 4:5, 6

III. GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; I Timothy 1:1, 2; 2:5, 6; I Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

IV. JESUS CHRIST

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:32; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9, 10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; I Timothy 3:16

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26, 27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

VI. REGENERATION

We believe that man was created by God in His own image; that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe that those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. Genesis 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Ecclesiastes. 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; II Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 19:3, 20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; John 3:16; John 1:13; II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1

VII. THE CHURCH

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the

primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25

VIII. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1-3; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15, 23-24; I John 2:3-6; II Corinthians 9:6-9; I Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 1:9-10

IX. THE ORDINANCES

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-26

X. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other. I Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9, 12

XI. CHURCH COOPERATION

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Acts 15:36,41; 16:5; I Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4, 10, 11. This church is affiliated with the Minnesota Baptist Conference and the Baptist General Conference, and may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis.

XII. THE LAST THINGS

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked. Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15; II Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 4:5; I Corinthians 15; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15

OUR CHURCH COVENANT

1. Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive Jesus Christ as the Lord, Savior, and supreme Treasure of our lives, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.
2. 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 peace; to promote its spirituality and fruitfulness; to sustain its worship, ordinances, and discipline; to welcome, and test biblically, instruction from the Scriptures by the elders of the church which accords with the Elder Affirmation of Faith, seeking to grow toward Biblical unity in the truth; 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 through all nations.
3. We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; 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 seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.
4. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another 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 rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.
5. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a like minded church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant.
6. We acknowledge that implicit within this covenant is the consent to be governed by the Relational Commitments that have been officially adopted by the church and that address peacemaking and reconciliation, accountability and church discipline, marriage and divorce, counseling and confidentiality, and the protection of our children.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith on the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by a living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this Church, who have been baptized by immersion and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this Church.

ARTICLE IV

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

1. Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the **membership** of the Church is the final authority within this local Church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of officers to govern the Church.
2. **The Church may organize itself into individual Campuses. A Campus is a group of members that conducts worship services, administers ordinances, and facilitates fellowship and ministry with dedicated resources under the leadership of officers (elders and deacons). A Campus may be established only upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders and approval by the Church. Each member of Bethlehem will be affiliated with a Campus when they become a member, and the affiliation will be used to determine a quorum for campus-specific meetings. Subsequent transfer of affiliation between campuses will be granted to members by notifying the Clerk or their designee of the transfer. For purposes of this Constitution and By-Laws, "Church" and "All Church" are synonymous.**
3. **The vote of the membership of this Church at a properly called meeting, as provided in the By-Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions:**
 - a. Accept members into the Church, give letters of transfer or recommendation to members, or drop members from the Church roll;
 - b. Elect officers of the Church;
 - c. Discipline members by dismissing them;
 - d. Discipline officers by removing them from office;
 - e. Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property;
 - f. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting;
 - g. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this church;
 - h. Approve the call and job description of those Elders who receive compensation from the Church for fulfilling their Elder responsibilities.
 - i. **All or any portions of actions identified in items a, b, c, and h above that relate to elders, officers, or members at a specific campus may be delegated to a campus-specific meeting of that campus upon recommendation of the Council of Elders; matters under item f may likewise be delegated to a campus-specific meeting, except matters that would affect multiple campuses or the whole Church may only be accepted, rejected, or disposed of either at an All Church meeting or by being approved at campus meetings for every campus affected.**
4. The offices of the Church shall be Elder and Deacon. The purpose of the officers of the Church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.

5. The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the Council of Elders who are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.
6. Deacons shall assist the Council of Elders by performing services of advice, administration and implementation.

ARTICLE V

THE CHURCH PROPERTY

1. In the event of a division of this Church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this Church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the Church membership before recognizing a division therein provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the Ruling Board of the Minnesota Baptist Conference, and their decision shall be final.
2. Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the Church work cannot continue, the Church property shall be transferred to the Minnesota Baptist Conference or its successor.
3. Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same denomination be advisable, the Council of Elders shall be authorized by the Church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this Church is concerned.

ARTICLE VI

REVISIONS, ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS

1. Revisions, additions or amendments of this constitution may be made only in the following manner:
 - a. at the annual meeting; and
 - b. by a majority vote of the membership, or a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting at such meeting, provided at least ten percent (10%) of the resident membership of the Church is present at such meeting; and
 - c. after presentation by written motion at a quarterly or special business meeting held at least three months before the annual meeting; and
 - d. if notice of the proposed change or addition has been given, in writing and from the pulpit on at least two weekends in the interim period between said meetings.
2. Article II (1) and VI (2) of this constitution shall not be repealed, amended nor revised.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 PROCEDURE

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the Church may, without special notice, receive new members.

Section 2 INSTRUCTION TO NEW MEMBERS

All persons uniting with this Church shall previously be made acquainted with the Church Covenant and the Membership Affirmation of Faith. New members shall pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations to regularly attend worship and participate in service and giving, when they make public profession of faith and join the Church.

Section 3 REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

- A. Members may be removed from membership upon recommendation by the Elders and a majority vote of the members present at any business meeting.
- B. Members in good standing may request a letter of recommendation to present to a different church. Members who unite with another Church will be removed from the membership roll.
- C. Members who are found to be inactive in the worship, fellowship and ministry of the Church will be removed from the membership roll. It is the responsibility of the Council of Elders to remind members of their duties in this respect.
- D. Members whose conduct consistently or grievously contradicts the commitments outlined in the Church Covenant may be subject to Church discipline under the leadership of the Elders.

ARTICLE II CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section 1 OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

The Biblical offices of the Church are Elders and Deacons. The Council of Elders are the legal directors of the Church. Elders and Deacons shall be called to office by vote of the membership of the Church as described in Article II, Sections 2–3 of these Bylaws. All Elders and Deacons of the Church shall be members in good and regular standing. The Church also recognizes the administrative positions of Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary and may employ additional personnel as described in Article III of these Bylaws.

Section 2

ELDERS

A. Qualifications

Elders and nominees for Elder shall be men of demonstrable godly character, above reproach in public and private, and committed to shepherding the flock of God and to teaching and guarding sound doctrine, as expressed in the Bethlehem Baptist Church Elder Affirmation of Faith. Elders and nominees will exemplify the Biblical characteristics of elder-overseers in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and I Peter 5:1-4 and will agree with the Bethlehem Baptist Church Elder Affirmation of Faith and commit to the Elders Covenant.

B. Responsibilities

The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for governing the Church as godly servant leaders. They must teach the Word and tend the flock of God in this Church. The responsibilities of the Elders shall include: examining prospective members and candidates for baptism and acquainting them with the Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant, overseeing the process of Church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings, providing for reporting and recording of official Church business, overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed Church agents and committees, conducting worship services, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church, and mobilizing the Church for world mission.

C. Composition

The Elder Council shall be composed of Staff and Non-Staff Elders. Staff Elders are men who receive financial compensation from the Church as they fulfill God's call to the specific ministries of the Word, prayer and shepherding the flock. In addition to the duties of their office as described in Section 'b' above, Staff Elders shall perform the duties determined by the Council of Elders and approved by the congregation. The duties shall be in writing at the time of employment and substantial changes shall be approved by the Church **or the Campus that the Staff Elder serves.**

Non-Staff Elders are men recommended by the Council of Elders and called by the Church who serve voluntarily without financial support from the Church as they fulfill God's call to the specific ministries of the Word, prayer and shepherding the flock.

D. Call by the Church

The members shall call Staff Elders and Non-Staff Elders (1) by ballot upon recommendation of the Council of Elders and (2) by at least a two-thirds majority of those members voting at the meeting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present **at an All-Church meeting or at least fifteen percent (15%) of the membership affiliated with a Campus at a Campus meeting**. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the two successive weekends preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting. Elders shall stand for reaffirmation not later than the third annual meeting following their call or previous reaffirmation. Reaffirmation of Elders shall be by two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at the meeting.

E. Organization

The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. Meetings of the Council of Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Council provides otherwise, meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon notice. The Council shall annually select its Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its Non-Staff Elders. The Council of Elders will meet at least quarterly and will consist of a quorum which is at least one-half of the Non-Staff elders plus at least one-half of the Staff Elders, except for matters on which only Non-Staff Elders are entitled to vote, in which case a majority of the Non-Staff elders shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3

DEACONS

A. Qualifications

Deacons and nominees for Deacon shall be men and women who are members in good standing and demonstrate godly character and possess particular gifts of service.

Deacons will exemplify the godly characteristics set forth in I Timothy 3:8-12.

B. Responsibilities

The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include: administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress; the greeting and welcoming ministries of the Church; assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel; assisting at fellowship gatherings of the Church; caring for and maintaining the Church properties; administering the business affairs of the Church that pertain to its material assets.

C. Composition

The Deacons may be both men and women. Deacons may or may not be employed by

the Church. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men and women in the Church.

D. Call by the Church

The members shall call Deacons (1) by ballot upon recommendation of the Council of Elders and (2) by at least a two-thirds majority of those members voting at the meeting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present **at an All-Church meeting or at least fifteen percent (15%) of the membership affiliated with a Campus at a Campus meeting**. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the next two successive weekends preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting. Deacons shall stand for reaffirmation not later than the third annual meeting following their call or previous reaffirmation. Reaffirmation of Deacons shall be by two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at the meeting.

E. Organization

Under the direction of the Elders, the Deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders or the Deacons may designate any specific Deacon or group of Deacons to specialize in some particular diaconal function. Meetings of the Deacons, or subcommittees thereof, shall be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities of the Deacons.

Section 4

REMOVAL

- A. By resignation. Elders or Deacons may resign their office at any time if they find they are no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.
- B. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an Elder or Deacon due to teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in Article II of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on their part unfitting an Elder or Deacon, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the call of the Elder or Deacon may be terminated at any business meeting upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the two successive weekends preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.
- C. Lack of Reaffirmation. If an Elder or Deacon fails to be reaffirmed to the office of Elder or Deacon a special business meeting shall be called to consider the question of terminating the call of that Elder or Deacon. The call shall be terminated only if supported by closed ballot of a majority of those members of the Church present and voting with at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church present. Public

notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given on the two successive weekends preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail (electronic or otherwise) to the membership at least one week before the meeting.

Section 5

LICENSING AND ORDINATION

In the matter of licensing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, the Church shall follow the procedure approved by the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE III

CHURCH EMPLOYEES

In addition to Staff Elders, the Church may employ additional personnel. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting. The Council of Elders or their designees will be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel.

ARTICLE IV

CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1

IN GENERAL

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the Church.

All funds donated for missions by the societies and organizations of the Church shall pass through the Church Finance Secretary and the Treasurer in order that due record may be made and credit given to the Church. The Deacons shall provide assistants for the Financial Secretary in accounting for funds donated.

Section 2

CONTRIBUTIONS

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum. Special offerings may be sought by the Church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Council of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

Section 3

FINANCIAL PLANNING

The financial planning of the Church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out of the various programs of its work. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders, or, if authorized by the Council, the Deacons or other committee. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay members of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate this responsibility provided such delegation is to lay Deacons or other lay members of the Church.

Section 4 ACCOUNTS

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Finance Secretary according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Treasurer of the Church shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the Church as detailed in the Budgets or other authorized designations. All moneys for missions shall be remitted in accordance with the Mission Budget of the Church or otherwise designated, preferably each month and not less than each quarter.

Section 5 INDEBTEDNESS

No note or contract exceeding 1% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the Church is pledged shall be made except by recommendation of the Council of Elders and approved by the Church.

Section 6 AUTHORITY TO BIND THE CHURCH

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council of Elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, the Church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

ARTICLE V MEETINGS

Section 1 FOR WORSHIP

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month or at such other times as the Council of Elders may determine. Other religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the Church may require.

Section 2

FOR BUSINESS

- A. **Meeting Designation.** Meetings shall be designated "All Church" or "Campus." All-Church meetings are those in which the entirety of the membership of Bethlehem Baptist Church is invited and encouraged to participate. Campus meetings are those conducted for the membership affiliated with an individual campus. All members of the church may participate in All-Church and Campus meetings.
- B. **The Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting shall be held some time during the last month of the fiscal year of the Church for the purpose of calling and reaffirming the officers, reviewing proposed budgets and other business. Officers called at the annual meeting shall assume their duties at the beginning of the new fiscal year.
- C. **Quarterly Meetings.** Quarterly meetings of the Church shall be held within the first month of each quarter of the fiscal year.
- D. **Special Meetings.** The Council of Elders or 5% of the members of the Church in good standing, may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these By-Laws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on specially important matters not otherwise provided for.
- E. **Quorum.** Any number of members shall constitute a quorum at any ordinary meeting of the Church. At meetings dealing with particular matters stipulated in these By-Laws, the quorums prescribed shall apply.
- F. **Rules Governing Business Meetings.** Robert's Rules of Order shall be recognized as the general pattern for the conduct of the business meetings of the Church. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.
- G. **Notice Provisions.** Unless specifically defined in other sections of these By-Laws or the Constitution, "resident membership" means those members who reside within 75 miles driving distance from the church building, "notice . . . in writing" means a written announcement sent by regular U.S. mail or other electronic means, and "notice . . . from the pulpit" means an oral announcement at each of the weekend worship services.
- H. **Electronic Meeting.** *When approved by the Council of Elders, any member business meeting may be conducted as an electronic meeting by remote communication using guidelines established by the Council of Elders. All members whose remote participation in a meeting complies with such guidelines are considered to be "present" for all purposes under these By-Laws and Robert's Rules of Order. All members "present" by any of these means have the same rights as members. The Council of Elders is not required to offer remote communication for a meeting, and no member has a right to demand participation by remote communication for any meeting for which the Council of Elders has not approved it. [NOTE: This proposed bylaws change (item "H") was presented in writing at the July 26, 2020, QSM, with an intent for the congregation to vote on its inclusion in the bylaws at the October 18, 2020 QSM. See [details](#).]*

ARTICLE VI

ORGANIZATION OF MEMBERS FOR MINISTRY

Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the Council of Elders as an official ministry of Bethlehem Baptist Church. Such sanction shall be granted provided that 1) the object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and 2) the primary officers of the organization are: members of the church, or other regular attenders of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Council of Elders. Sanction by the Council of Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested as provided by the leadership of the church.

ARTICLE VII

DISCIPLINE

Church discipline shall be carried out by the Council of Elders in accord with the Constitution and By-Laws and as explained in our Relational Commitments developed by the Council of Elders and approved and consented to by the members.

ARTICLE VIII

RELATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Relationships in the church will be guided and governed by the biblical principles set forth in a document entitled "Relational Commitments," which is incorporated into these Bylaws by reference. This document establishes our commitments related to peacemaking and reconciliation, accountability and church discipline, preserving marriages, biblical counseling and confidentiality, and the protection of our children. These Commitments shall apply to members of our church, and may be amended from time to time in the same way that these Bylaws may be amended.

ARTICLE IX

AMENDMENTS

General

Amendments to these By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any quarterly meeting, with the exception of Article II(4)(b) regarding amending the Elder Affirmation of Faith which as previously stated may only be amended by a recommendation of the Council of Elders to the church. Amendments shall not be acted on until the following quarterly or annual meeting, at which time an affirmative vote of the majority of the membership of the Church, or a two-thirds majority of those members present at the meeting and voting shall be required for acceptance; provided, however, that at least ten percent (10%) of the membership of the Church be present at such meeting, and that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the pulpit on at least two weekends and in writing to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.