

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

I. NAME

This body shall be known as the Oakhill Baptist Church of 4615 Oak Hill Road, Evansville, Indiana.

II. OBJECTIVES

- To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our church, community, and throughout the world.
- To be a worshipping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.
- To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.
- To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.
- To be a church that ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and world in Jesus' name.
- To be a church whose purpose is to be Christlike in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the leadership of Christ.

III. 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 statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in Session, Orlando, Florida on June 14, 2000, as recorded on page 76, Annual of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2000 (Appendix A). In addition to the Baptist Faith and Message, Oakhill Baptist Church has adopted a separate Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality on August 30, 2015 (Appendix B). Furthermore, we band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

IV. RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. In so far as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the association and State Convention affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

V. CHURCH COVENANT

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

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; 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.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to religiously educate our children; 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 sin and seek to walk in a worthy manner to the calling we have received; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

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 Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the example set by our Savior Jesus Christ.

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.

BY-LAWS

I. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1- General

This is a sovereign and autonomous Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be a member of the church and the condition of such membership.

Section 2-Candidacy

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways.

1. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of the church.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church.
3. By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtainable.
4. By testimony of scriptural baptism having been immersed as a believer by a New Testament church.

Candidates must agree with the beliefs, practices, and statement of faith of Oakhill Baptist Church. Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Elder Leadership Team for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church by the next regularly scheduled business meeting. A three-fourths vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership at the regular scheduled business meeting.

Section 3- Member Expectations

Church members will be expected to participate in the life of church. They will be asked to do four things: attend worship regularly, join a small group bible study, serve in the church and/or community, and participate in regular giving.

Section 4 – Membership Classification & Voting Rights

Active Members shall be the regular classification for anyone that attends worship regularly and displays a regular pattern of giving. Active members have full voting rights on any and all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in a business meeting, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting

Inactive members shall be members that do not display regular worship attendance or regular giving for 1 year. These members do not have voting rights. Inactive member's status will be reinstated automatically to active with a regular pattern of attendance and giving.

Two exceptions will be made to the inactive classification. 1) Members who are physically unable to attend due to illness or handicap will be considered active, 2) As will members who temporarily move for work or military service.

Section 5- Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) death, (2) by letter to another Baptist church, (3) removal in response to a formal written request, (4) by action of this church as deemed necessary.

In cases of long inactivity (must be more than 2 years) from a member and after earnest effort has been made to locate or contact said members such members will be considered for removal from church membership.

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any condition which has been made necessary for the church to exclude him or her, may upon his or her request be restored to membership by a majority vote of the church in a business meeting. In the case of church discipline the person must also display evidence of repentance and reformation.

Section 6- Discipline

It shall be the basic purpose of the Oakhill Baptist Church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Lead Pastor, other members of the church staff and Elders are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be our standard which governs the attitude toward one another.

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastors, lay elders, and deacons to resolve the problem. Matthew 18:15-20 shall be our guiding example for dealing with conflict and exercising church discipline (see appendix C for specifics on implementing the Matthew 18 church discipline plan). All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But, finding that the person in question is unrepentant and refuses to follow the church discipline plan he or she will no longer be considered a member and be removed from the membership role.

II. CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1- Pastors & Elders

Elder is the Biblical role found throughout the New Testament and has roots in the prophets of the Old Testament. In its simplest form an elder is an overseer of the church. There are three distinct terms used in scripture to describe this role: elder, overseer, and shepherd (pastor). These roles, while they have different meanings and responsibilities for the man they pertain to, refer to the same office. The primary responsibilities for Elders are ministry of the word, shepherding, leadership or oversight, and serving as an example to the church. The qualifications for an elder are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-11, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-7. For organizational purposes we have two types of elders: **Directional Elders** and **Shepherding Elders**. Neither role is more qualified than the other, but they serve in different functions. To provide a bridge in the organizational structure some of the elders may serve as both directional and shepherding.

Directional Elders will provide oversight for the church and its mission. They will mainly deal with big picture issues such as finances, facilities, and strategic endeavors. The Directional Elders will compose an Elder Leadership Team. This team will be comprised of the Lead Pastor, three Lay Elders and other Pastors as appointed by the Lead Pastor

Shepherding Elders will focus primarily on leading the ministries of the church and giving leadership in specific areas of ministry. They are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the church and the ministries. Each Shepherding Elder will be responsible for oversight of one or more specific ministry areas. These elders will compose the Executive Ministry Leadership Team. This team will be comprised of the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastors, and other staff members may be added at the discretion of the Lead Pastor.

Section 2: Deacons

Deacons, as found in scripture, are defined by serving. Their primary function is to lead out in serving the church. They should be concerned with the practical details of the church, including administration, maintenance, care for the church members, and support of the Pastor and Elders. Deacons must meet the Biblical qualifications that are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons will be responsible for the organization of the Lord's Supper and Baptism. They will also oversee the benevolence offering, benevolence team and the financial assistance to church members. They shall also oversee the visitation of new guest, hospitalized

members, and shut-in members. Finally they will seek to always support the Pastor and Elders by seeking to pray for them, protect the reputation of the ministry, and promote the ministry of the church.

III. APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION CHURCH OFFICERS & STAFF

Section 1- Lead Pastor/Elder

A Lead Pastor Selection Team shall be appointed to seek out a suitable pastor and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. The team shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The Lead Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.

The Lead Pastor may be asked to step-down from his position for any action or conduct that would disqualify him as defined by scripture. The Lead Pastor may only be removed by a majority vote of the active membership, which is equal to a quorum as stated in this document, in a special called business meeting.

The Lead Pastor shall give two weeks at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as Lead Pastor. He shall preside at meetings of the church, and serve as moderator in all business meetings. The Lead Pastor shall be ex officio on all administrative teams.

In case of absence of the Lead Pastor, the church will follow the leadership given by the Elder Leadership Team. The Elder Leadership Team is also responsible for securing an interim pastor and/or pulpit supply.

Section 2 – Lay Elders

Lay Elders, who meet the Biblical qualifications and are active members, will be presented to the church by the Lead Pastor in consultation with the Elder Leadership Team in a business meeting for a vote of affirmation. The Elder Leadership Team must be unanimous in its recommendation. Lay Elders will serve indefinitely or until they step down or the church ask them to step down. They may be asked to step down from this role for any action or conduct that would disqualify them as defined by scripture. An elder who has been disqualified will be removed by a three-fourths vote of the rest of the Elder Leadership Team. The Elder Leadership Team will refer to the diagram in appendix C on handling church discipline with a leader for guidance on removing an elder.

Section 3-Church Staff

Non-ministerial staff such as assistants, secretaries, custodians, etc. shall be employed as the church shall have need. These staff members shall be interviewed and hired by the Lead Pastor and/or the Administrative Pastor.

Ministerial Staff such as associate pastors/elders, directors, and coordinators shall be employed as the church shall have need. These staff members shall be found and interviewed by the Lead Pastor. Once a candidate has been identified he or she shall be interviewed by the Personnel Team. If the candidate is found to meet the biblical qualifications of the position, is thought to be able to competently fulfill the role, and expresses a calling to the position then he or she will be brought before the church for a vote of affirmation.

All staff members must give at least a two week resignation notice. Any staff member may be asked to step-down from his or her position for any action or conduct that would disqualify him or her as defined by scripture. The church will refer to the diagram in appendix C on handling church discipline with a leader for guidance in removing a staff member.

Section 4- Deacons

The number of Deacons will be based on the number of men that meet the qualifications and express a calling to the position. Deacons shall serve on a rotation basis, serving for a period of three years. There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to the church from another church where he has served as a deacon. Whenever the need arises to fill an unexpired term of service, a replacement may be sought by the deacon body to complete the term, to be approved and voted on by the church body. No one shall be elected to serve as a deacon until he has been a member of Oakhill Baptist Church for at least one year prior to nomination.

Beginning in early July, nominations will be accepted from the church membership for the office of deacon. Nominations will be accepted using the "Deacon Nomination Form" provided. The nominees to be considered must be from the resident male members of the church, 21 years or older, may include ordained men not serving in an active capacity or rotating to inactive status at the end of the church year on August 31.

The nominees for the office of deacon shall be screened by the Lead Pastor and Deacon Chairman, then after discussion with the candidate and their families he is presented to the deacon body for confirmation. Those found qualified for and express a call to the office shall be presented to the church body for affirmation.

At a business meeting, the church shall vote on the list of qualified candidates recommended by the deacon body. The election shall be based on a Yes-No type ballot system. Any candidate who receives greater than a 25% No vote of ballots cast, by members present, will not be elected to the office of deacon. The term of office shall commence with the September 1st church year.

A Deacon-elect process shall be observed which provides that those nominees recommended to the church, which have not been previously ordained, shall serve a Deacon-Elect during the first year with the full rights and responsibilities of the office of deacon except ordination. At the end of the year, the assessment by both the deacon body and the Deacon-Elect shall dictate whether the Deacon-Elect shall be recommended to the church for ordination. After ordination the newly ordained deacon shall serve the remainder of his elected period as indicated at the time of his election the prior year. For any Deacon-Elect who might not continue to serve, elections as prescribed by our By-Laws take place to complete his term.

Section 5-Moderator

The Lead Pastor shall serve as moderator in all business meetings. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

Section 6-Clerk

A clerk shall be appointed annually by the Elder Leadership Team. The church clerk shall keep a suitable book, a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk is responsible for keeping a register of names of the church members, with dates of membership, removal, or death together with record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismission voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these By-Laws. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office.

Section 7-Treasurer

When the Treasurer position is vacant the Finance Team shall present a candidate for a vote of affirmation

in a business meeting. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting, an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The Treasurer may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a financial secretary. The financial statement shall be reviewed annually by the finance team or an auditing committee. The annual audit report shall be presented no later than the August business meeting.

Section 8-Financial Secretary

The Elder Leadership Team shall appoint a Financial Secretary. The secretary shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons selected by the church to serve in turn; and from these give donors individual credit. They will also receive a statement of any digital giving on a weekly basis and give these donors individual credit. The envelopes shall be kept for reference for a period of no less than two years. The secretary will fill out the sheet for the monthly balance, which will indicate receipts from envelopes, and miscellaneous or special offerings. The secretary shall be responsible for preparing and distributing quarterly records of contributions to all contributing members and shall be responsible for preparing and distributing to each donor an annual statement of all donations within fifteen days after the close of each calendar year. The records will be kept in the church office and the Church Secretary may be appointed to record receipts. The financial records of all individuals will be strictly private, and no one may have access to the records without permission of the Finance Team.

Section 9-Corporate Officers

Three corporate officers (President, Vice-President, and Secretary) shall be nominated by the Elder Leadership Team and affirmed by the church in a business meeting. They shall serve a three year term. Corporate officers may serve no more than two consecutive terms, but may be re-elected after sitting out a term. These corporate officers shall hold in trust the property of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of these officers to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging, or purchase or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of the officers are required. For protection to our officers, our church shall be incorporated and kept in effect. The corporate officers shall be responsible to see that proper Articles of Incorporation are filed and kept in effect at all times. These officers shall work in concert with the financial secretary and may delegate clerical responsibilities.

IV. GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE

Section 1-General Structure

Oakhill Baptist Church is **Jesus ruled, elder led, and congregationally accountable**. Jesus is the ultimate authority and leader of the church. We submit to Him and desire to follow His instruction found in scripture. Elders are given the responsibility to lead the church. They understand they are subject to Christ's leadership and accountable to the church at all times. The congregation members should willingly follow the leadership of the elders unless their directives violate scripture. Undoubtedly individual members will encounter decisions they disagree with but unless they believe those decisions to be in violation of scripture or personal conscience they should submit to the elders. Refer to Appendix D for a flowchart of the governmental structure.

Section 2 – Elder Leadership Team

The Elder Leadership Team will be made up of the Lead Pastor, three Lay Elders, and other pastors appointed by the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor is expected to be the leader of the Elder Leadership team. He is to give Godly, biblical, prayerful and visionary leadership to set the overall vision of the church. He will work in concert with this team to decide the overall direction of the church. The congregation will follow that direction as they must be intricately involved in making these ministries function. This team will have final authority on all matters concerning the overall direction of the organization unless otherwise stated in this document. **The Elder Leadership Team may not** terminate or appoint a Lead Pastor, approve debt for the organization in excess of 5% of the current year's annual budget, approve the annual budget, change or establish the denominational affiliation of the church, or change the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, or by-laws. These matters must be brought before the church for a vote according to the system stated in this document. In the case in which this team is not unanimous on its decisions a three-fourths majority vote will be taken to make the final decision. The only exception being in the case of electing lay elders to the team, in this case the team must be unanimous. The Elder Leadership Team will appoint and remove the members of the Administrative teams unless otherwise stated in this document.

Section 3 - Executive Ministry Leadership Team

The Executive Ministry Team is composed of the Lead Pastor, associate pastors, and other staff personnel appointed by the Lead Pastor. This team follows the direction of the Elder Leadership Team as they lead individual ministries and programs. They are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the church and its ministries. Each individual team member will be responsible for one or more ministry teams. The leader of a specific ministry team shall be free to prayerfully recruit his or her team members.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE TEAMS

Section 1-Personnel Team

This team assists the church in administrative matters related to employed personnel. It's work includes areas of staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, and personnel services. The team will be led by a lay elder from the Elder Leadership Team.

Section 2- Finance Team

This team shall: 1. Arrange for an annual financial review of the churches books, not to exceed 30 days after the close of the church year. 2. Make offering envelopes and/or digital options available for systematic giving. 3. May call upon the Treasurer to surrender all books and accounts for review. 4. Prepare with assistance of the Elder Leadership Team, the church budget for each fiscal year. 5. Promote stewardship within the church. The team will be led by a lay elder from the Elder Leadership Team. This team shall meet once a month to review the previous month's financial statement. They will also be charged with giving a financial report at regularly scheduled business meetings.

Section 3-Counting Team

This team shall receive, count, record, and deposit all money of the church, in a bank selected by the church, no later than the first banking day after each Sunday. The committee shall give all empty offering envelopes to the Financial Secretary. THE MONIES RECEIVED SHALL ALWAYS BE COUNTED IN THE PRESENCE OF TWO

PEOPLE (if one or two members of this team should be absent, the other member is required to secure a trustworthy active church member in good standing.) This team will be appointed by the Finance Team. They will also be accountable to the Finance Team on all counting procedures.

Section 4-Pastor Selection Team

In such a case as the pastorate is vacant, church members shall nominate other church members which meet the requirements using a nomination form. Team members must be active members in good standing with the church body; in addition they must be active in serving in at least one volunteer position within the scope of the churches ministry. The Elder Leadership Team shall examine the nominations to make sure they meet the requirements for service as well as make sure the nominees are willing to serve on this team should they be elected. The elected team must consist of 7 members with a distribution of no more than 4 men or women. Nominees that are found willing and acceptable will be brought before the church in a special called business meeting. The election shall be based on a Yes-No ballot system. The members shall vote for the required number of men and women. Those receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected. The elected committee shall elect their chairman, vice chairman, and secretary. The church shall assume all costs incurred by the work of this team.

VI. MINISTRY TEAMS

Ministry teams shall be formed to help the church accomplish its purpose and mission. These teams will be for the purpose of outreach, education, discipleship, worship, missions, and ministry. These teams will seek to both encourage and disciple the congregation; and reach out to the community with the gospel. There shall be no restriction on number of teams. They will be established and dissolved as the Executive Ministry Leadership Team shall have need and see fit. The ministry teams and leaders will follow the direction laid out by the Elder Leadership Team. Each team will be accountable to a staff member, pastor, or elder. They will be staffed by volunteers from the congregation. Teams will ultimately be accountable to their team leader who is accountable to the Executive Ministry Leadership Team. Any member can request to be a part of any team, but must be approved by that team leader. Any team member can be removed at any time by a team leader for conduct or actions that violates scripture. The team member will refer to Appendix C for guidance in dealing with disciplinary issues.

VII. ORDINANCES

Section 1-Baptism

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism.

1. Baptism shall be immersion in water.
2. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whomever the church shall authorize. The deacons shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during a worship service.
4. A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff and deacons. If negative interest is ascertained, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 2- The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, 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 every other month, preferably the last Sunday of the month, or as otherwise scheduled.
2. The Lord's Supper shall be observed in a worship service(s)
3. The pastors and the deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
4. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.
5. A Love Offering will be taken after each Lord's Supper for a benevolent fund which is administered by the Deacon Benevolence Team.

VIII. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1- Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning for preaching, instruction, evangelism, prayer, and for the worship of Almighty God. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

Section 2-Special Services

Special services, emphases, and any other church meetings which will be essential to the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be authorized by the Elder Leadership Team and placed on the church calendar.

Section 3- Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings, also called M3 Meetings, shall be held four times year. Preferably February, May, August, and November as the church calendar allows.

Section 4- Special Business Meetings

A special called business meeting may be held to consider special matters of significant nature. A one week notice shall be given for the special called business meeting, unless extreme urgency renders such notice impracticable.

Section 5- Quorum

The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called, except in the matter of firing or appointing a Lead Pastor, approving debt for the organization in excess of 20% of the current year's annual budget, changing or establishing the denominational affiliation of the church, or changing the articles of incorporation, constitution, and by-laws. These matters must be voted on by a quorum of no less than active member's numbering fifty percent of the previous year's annual average worship attendance.

Section 6- Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the guide used for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church. Scripture will be our ultimate authority in governing the church body, its meetings, and conduct during such meetings.

IX. CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1-Budget

The Finance Team, in consultation with the Elder Leadership Team, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and world-wide expenses. A means of giving whether is by offering envelopes or in a digitally secure manner will be provided for members' use. It is understood that membership in the church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. The church budget for the next year shall be adopted at the November business meeting and submitted to the church at least two weeks prior to its adoption. The leadership and ministries of the church shall have freedom to spend the budget for the approved purposes and in the proper categories. The Elder Leadership Team in conjunction with the Finance Team have the authority to spend monies up to 5% of the annual budget on unbudgeted items that may be deemed emergencies or necessary for the church.

Section 2- Accounting Procedures

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the Church Treasurer, or Financial Secretary, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Finance Team.

Section 3- Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall be January 1 through December 31.

X. AMENDMENTS

Changes in this constitution and by-laws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided such amendments have been presented in writing at a previous, regular scheduled meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments to the constitution and bylaw must be voted on and approved by a majority of a quorum of members as stated in this document.

APPENDIX

A – The Baptist Faith and Message, 2000

B – Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

C - Church Discipline Flow Chart

D - OHBC Leadership Flow Chart

E – Elder Philosophy from Summit Church (SBC) Durham, NC –
a document used as a resource in forming the leadership structure

Appendix A

The Baptist Faith and Message, 2000

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. God

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.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3:9-6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29;15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13;Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79;2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19;Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-

5; 7:17;9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

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 Saviour, 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. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war. The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The

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state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Appendix B

Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

(Adopted in addition to the Baptist Faith and Message, 2000 by Oakhill Baptist Church on August, 30 2015)

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male and female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen. 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen. 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and woman.

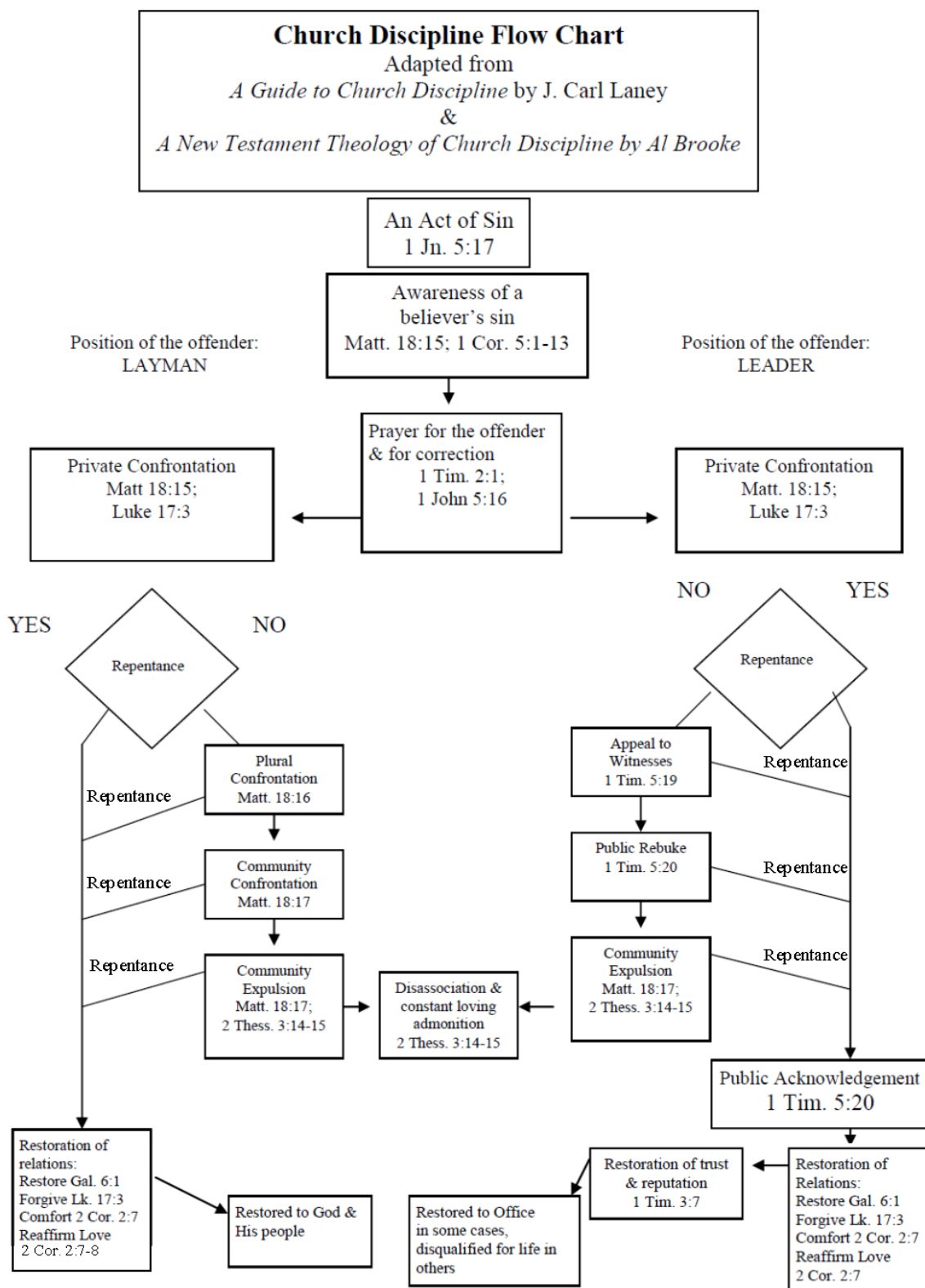
We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10.)

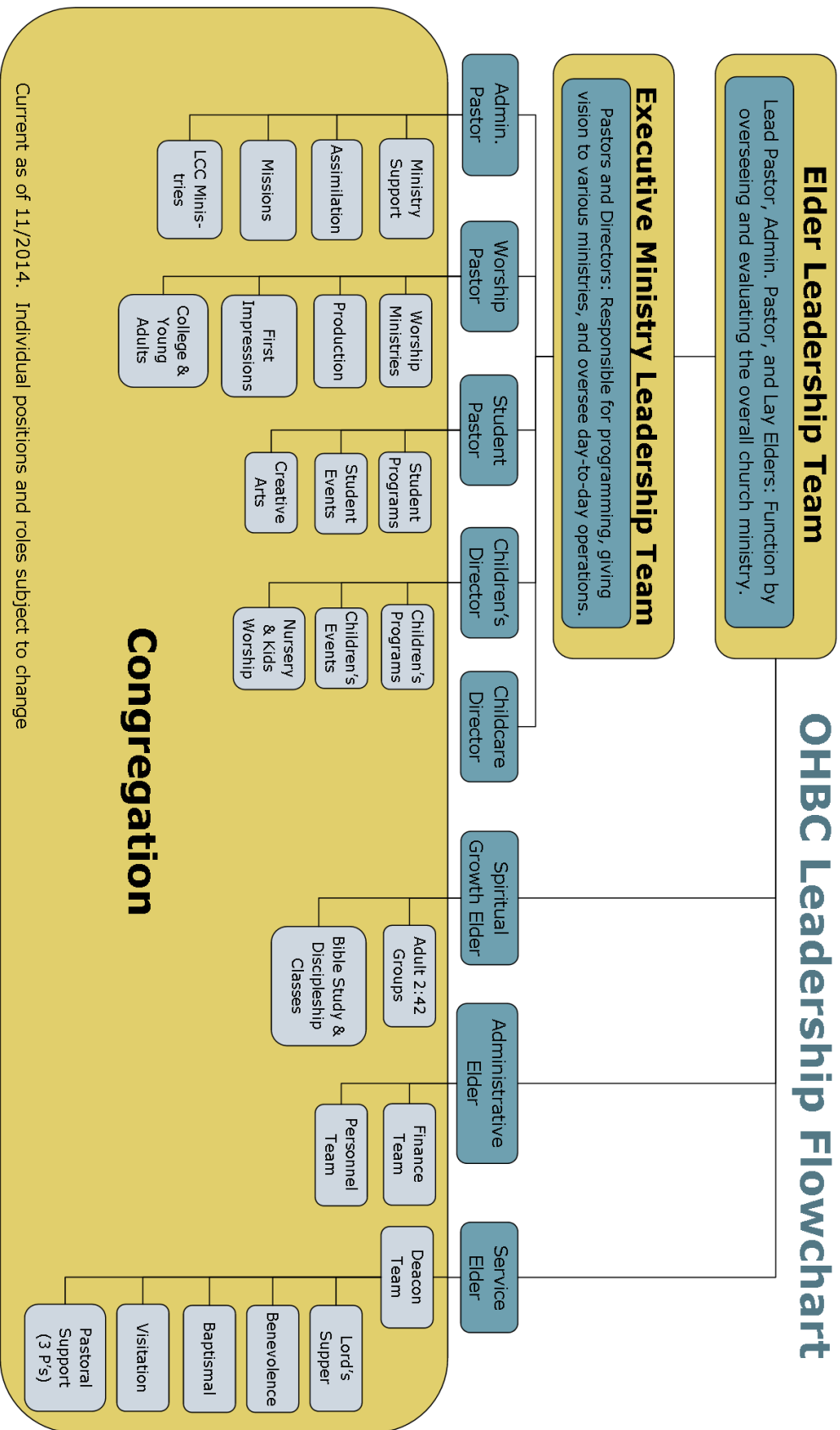
We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Oakhill Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the members of Oakhill Baptist Church and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Oakhill Baptist Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22.)

We believe that God offers redemption of restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Oakhill Baptist Church

Appendix C





THE SUMMIT CHURCH ELDER PHILOSOPHY

BIBLICAL BASIS

While the fundamental responsibility under God for the maintenance of all aspects of public worship belongs to the congregation, as with any gathered body of people, the church must be led.¹ The biblical model presents two specific offices in the local church: deacon and elder. Deacons have been referred to as the table servants or waiters of the church.² The deacon should be concerned with the practical details of church life, including administration, maintenance, and the care of church members with physical needs.³ The elder, also called the pastor or overseer, should be concerned with the spiritual needs and leadership of the church. While many debate over the issue of terminology, the three terms are used interchangeably in Scripture (Acts 20; 1 Peter 5).⁴

Though there are references to the role and responsibility of elders throughout the New Testament, the key texts are Acts 20:18-31, Romans 12:8, Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17, Titus 1:5-9, Hebrews 13:7, 17, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. These texts describe the four primary responsibilities assigned to the office of elder: ministry of the Word, shepherding, leadership or oversight, and serving as an example to the flock.⁵ The qualifications for the office of elder are given primarily in 1 Timothy 3:1-11, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-7. In these passages, high spiritual, moral, social, and familial qualifications are outlined. In addition to terminology, role, and responsibility, the Bible also presents an answer to the issue of the number of elders. When one looks at the verses containing the words elder, overseer, and pastor, a consistent pattern of plurality emerges.⁶ Luke, Paul, James, and Peter all refer to the office of elder in the church,

¹ Mark Dever, *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible* (Nashville: B&H, 2013), 47-8.

² Thabiti M. Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 19.

³ Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 231.

⁴ John S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 161.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 163-6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 178.

with each presuming a plurality of elders per congregation (Acts 14:23, 20:17; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim 4:14, 5:17; Titus 1:5; Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1-5).⁷

ELDER STRUCTURE

At The Summit Church, we are Jesus ruled, elder led, and congregationally accountable. This means that elders are given the responsibility to lead in various matters, though they are always aware that they are subject to Christ's leadership and accountable to the church at large. Congregation members should submit to the leadership of the leaders unless their directives violates Scripture or is in clear opposition to the mission of the church. Undoubtedly individual members will encounter decisions they would have made differently, but unless they believe those decisions to be violations of conscience, they should submit to the elders, recognizing the elders have been given jurisdiction over the day-to-day affairs of the church.

The Summit Church strives to combine the best of three distinct leadership structures, which may be labeled the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Pentecostal models. In the Baptist model, the congregation drives the decision-making through democratic processes. In the Presbyterian model, qualified people are assigned to lead, exercising a measure of authority over those within their particular jurisdiction. In the Pentecostal model, the church recognizes that God has anointed certain individuals with vision and leadership vision for certain tasks, and submits itself to that "anointing." We hope to foster the congregational accountability and empowerment characteristic of the Baptist model, the responsible division of pastoral duties characteristic of the Presbyterian model, and the prophetic risk-taking characteristic of the Pentecostal model.

We have two forms of elders: directional elders and shepherding elders. While neither role is more qualified than the other, they serve in different functions. The directional elder team provides oversight for the church at large, dealing with big picture issues such as finances, facilities, church planting, and strategic endeavors. The shepherding elder teams focus primarily on shepherding at their individual campuses and giving leadership to small groups.

The directional elder team provides both leadership and oversight for the vision and direction of our church, and is made up of four members of our staff team and four lay members. The four lay elders serve in four-year terms, with one rotating off each

⁷ Dever, *The Church*, 57-8.

year. According to our bylaws, each lay elder can serve two consecutive terms. The directional elder team meets once a month, meeting for four to five hours. Occasionally, the team will have specially called meetings or handle matters via email. The job description for directional elders is three-fold: (1) give wise counsel; (2) put on the brakes at times by saying no; and (3) help in matters of crises, such as church discipline, member crises, and media.⁸

The reason we decided to structure our directional elder team in this way is two-fold: (1) we wanted to create a balance between staff and lay elders, with the ability for lay elders to have equal vote into matters; and (2) as the church grew, we did not want to limit the number of elders. At the same time, though, we wanted the elder team to function well and be able to come to decisions. When groups grow too large, it becomes more challenging to have discussion and keep everyone informed.

In addition to the directional elder team, each campus has shepherding elders. There is no limit to the number of elders at a campus, and currently this is a much larger group than the directional elder board. Campus elders work closely with campus staff teams in order to effectively shepherd their campus. The job description of the shepherding elder is to work alongside the campus pastor in shepherding the congregation at that campus. Specifically, the shepherding elder gives wise counsel, disciples the congregation by coaching small group leaders, and helps in times of crisis by handling church discipline matters.