

THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH OF STAUNTON, VA

105 Garland Drive, Staunton, VA 24401

CONSTITUTION

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CONSTITUTION OF CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Under which the Church was organized October 12, 1958, and as amended September 9, 1959, March 10, 1965, July 1970, February 1990, February 1994, May 1995, August 20, 2000, February 10, 2002, May 29, 2005, October 29, 2006 and September 10, 2023. The church was legally incorporated on May 7, 2008.

PREAMBLE

In order that this body may be governed in an orderly manner as a Baptist Church in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and the Southern Baptist Convention: we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I: NAME

This body shall be known as Calvary Baptist Church of Staunton, VA, hereinafter referred to as "Church." The principal location of worship of the Church shall initially be 105 Garland Dr. Staunton, VA 24401.

ARTICLE II: AFFILIATIONS AND PURPOSE

The Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively as a nonprofit church, for the religious, charitable and educational purposes stated herein including but not limited to licensing, commissioning, ordaining and overseeing ministers of the gospel, worship, evangelism, missions, ministry to the poor and needy, Christian education, discipleship and fellowship according to biblical principles and is an organization exempt from tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended or any successor statute of similar import. The Church is not organized for profit and it is not authorized to issue capital stock.

This Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of co-operation with other churches in world missions, this Church voluntarily affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state (SBC of Virginia) and local expressions as deemed appropriate by the Pastors, Pastors' Council, and the congregation of this Church.

ARTICLE III: VISION

The Church exists to glorify God by leading, teaching and training people to experience God in worship, grow in Christ together, serve one another in ministry and go into the world to make disciples.

Objectives

1. **Evangelism:** To be a living body empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel to as many people as possible in our Church, community, and throughout the world.
2. **Worship:** To be a worshipping body that experiences the presence of God, recognizing Him in three persons, and responding in obedience to His will.
3. **Fellowship:** To be a body experiencing growth in the knowledge of God together, resulting in obedience to His will.
4. **Ministry:** To be a body that ministers unselfishly to persons in the Church, community and world in Jesus' name.
5. **Discipleship:** Teaching and training the body to be Christ-like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

ARTICLE IV: STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. We believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God in the original languages and is the basis for all we do.
2. We accept the *Baptist Faith and Message, 2000* as our statement of faith (found in *Referenced Documents*).
3. In accordance with the *Baptist Faith and Message, 2000* we also adopt the *2017 Nashville Statement, a Coalition for Biblical Sexuality* (found in *Referenced Documents*).

ARTICLE V: AMENDMENTS

Members may propose changes to the Constitution that shall be submitted to the Pastors' Council for consideration and comment. The Pastors' Council may, after review, present the proposed changes and comments to the Church at a Special Business Meeting. This Constitution may be amended by a three quarter (3/4) vote of the members present and voting, provided that the proper quorum is present, and the following procedures have been followed:

1. The proposed written amendment has been presented at a previous Business Meeting.
2. The proposed amendment has been mailed or made available to the membership at least 4 weeks before the meeting to act on the amendment.
3. The proposed amendment has been announced on a previous Sunday morning at least 2 weeks before the vote is taken.

ARTICLE VI: CHURCH COVENANT

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with Calvary's statements of faith, strategy, and structure and agree to follow its governing documents, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Calvary church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other church members to do the following:

1. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH
 - ...By acting in love toward other members.
 - ...By refusing to gossip.
 - ...By following the leaders as they follow Christ.
2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH
 - ...By praying for its growth.
 - ...By inviting the unchurched to attend.
 - ...By warmly welcoming those who visit.
3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH
 - ...By discovering and using my gifts and talents.
 - ...By being equipped to serve by my Pastors.
 - ...By developing a servant's heart.
4. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH
 - ...By attending faithfully.
 - ...By living a godly life.
 - ...By giving regularly.

I have read the Articles, Constitution, and By-Laws including but not limited to those policies dealing with church discipline, conflict resolution and members' rights and responsibilities and holy covenant and agree to be bound by the Articles, Constitution and By-Laws and accompanying policies and procedures.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Today's Date: _____

BY-LAWS OF CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

ARTICLE I: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A. Requirements for Membership:

1. Saved by confession of faith in Jesus Christ, followed by baptism by immersion, or
2. Letter from another church of like faith and practice, or
3. Statement that one has been saved and baptized by immersion or will follow the Lord in believer's baptism, or
4. Restoration after repentance (applies to those who have been removed from the Church's membership for breach of covenant.)

B. Procedure for Receiving Membership:

1. Connect with a Pastor expressing desire to become a member of the Church
2. Fill out "Application for Church Membership"
3. Complete the new church member training class (age 14 years and older) and presentation to the congregation
4. Be baptized by water immersion after confession of faith
5. Enter into church covenant by reading, agreeing to and signing a copy of the Church Covenant
6. Voting on new church members will occur at a regular Church Business Meeting following the completion of the above requirements

C. Categories of Membership:

1. Active Member:
 - a. An active member is any person over the age of 14 that has completed the requirements for membership and continue to be members in good standing by regular attendance, giving, serving, or communicating the approved reasons to the Pastors for an exception for not doing so. These members will have full rights and privileges. Those individuals that have not yet reached the age of 14 are considered Associating Believers and do not have voting rights.
 - b. Responsibilities of Church Members: Each member of the Church is responsible to obey the commands of God's Word in demonstrating a growing, maturing relationship with Christ, being actively involved in service to the Body with their respective gifts and abilities, faithfully and regularly giving their tithes and offering to support the local Church, and actively seeking to evangelize and minister to a lost world.
 - c. Dismissal and/or Transfer of Members
 - i. At death, a member's name will be removed from the roll by the Church Clerk.

- ii. Any member in good standing who has fulfilled his obligation to this Church, upon vote of the Church, may be granted a letter of recommendation to unite with some other church of like faith and order.
 - iii. When a member joins another church, and this can be verified, the Church will vote for dismissal.
 - iv. When a member so conducts himself so that he breeches the Church Covenant, the Church will take action, as it considers wise (Matthew 18:15-17) as defined below under section 5. Non-involvement with the Church constitutes reproach on the Lord and His Church.
- d. **Voting Rights of Active Membership:**
Active members 14 years of age and above, who are not under Church discipline, have equal rights of voting and expression in the decisions of this Church. Members on the meeting date who are otherwise eligible to vote are entitled to vote at the meeting. Voting by proxy is prohibited. All absentee ballots must be approved by the Moderator, prior to the meeting. After the proper quorum has been met, all votes shall be successful if by simple majority unless provided otherwise herein for matters of exception (see Article II. B.)
- i. Annual Budget and any significant change in the budget during the year as decided by the Pastors' Council (Council) and the Budget/Finance Committee.
 - ii. Election of the Council, Deacons, Officers and other Leaders.
 - iii. Merger or dissolution of the church, dissolving or disposition of all, or substantially all, of the Church assets – 2/3 vote (matter of exception)
 - iv. Acquisition or sale of real property, and/or building projects and related indebtedness – 2/3 vote (matter of exception)
 - v. Amendments to the Constitution – 3/4 vote (matter of exception)
 - vi. Amendments to the By-Laws – 2/3 vote (matter of exception)
 - vii. Calling of a Pastor – 3/4 vote (matter of exception)
 - viii. Removing a Pastor – majority vote and requires quorum for matter of exception
 - ix. Reception of new members and their removal from the membership rolls
 - x. Any other major event or decision as designated by the Council
 - xi. All matters agreed upon by the Council calling for action not already provided for, shall be referred to the Church for approval or disapproval
2. **Inactive Member:** Members who evidence no interest in the Church by attendance, communication, or contribution for six months or longer may be classified as inactive members. Inactive members have neither voice nor vote in Church affairs and may not hold office. The names of inactive members shall be announced to the members. At least one Deacon, or their designee, shall contact each inactive member and seek to restore them to active fellowship. After an additional 6-month period, if no interest in restoration is shown, a recommendation will then be presented by the Deacons to the Council and then will be referred to the congregation that the name be removed by a simple majority vote from the active Church membership and placed on the Inactive Roll.
3. **Inactive Roll:** People whose names are on the Inactive Roll are not to be counted as members on any official report of our membership, and accordingly they are not entitled to vote in any business meeting of the Church or be entitled to a regular letter of dismissal. Anyone on the Inactive Roll may be restored to active (voting) membership by (1) a public rededication in a worship service and by (2) requesting the Church to restore active (voting) membership status as described in these By-Laws.

4. **Associating Believer:** Those individuals who have not met all the qualifications of active membership, or, for whatever reason, do not desire to give up their home church shall be considered Associating Believers. These shall agree to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Associating Believers may participate in Church activities, serve with Church ministries, and assist in leadership under direct supervision. They may not vote. Upon meeting all the qualifications of active membership or transferring from their home church, Associating Believers may become Active Members according to these By-Laws.

5. **Church Discipline:**
 - a. It shall be the practice of this Church to pursue every reasonable measure for peace and reconciliation. Should one member sin against another member or the Body of members (the Church), the aggrieved members shall follow in a tender spirit the rules given by our Lord and Savior in Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15. The Pastoral Staff (Pastors), Council, Deacons, and mature members are available for guidance to the aggrieved members. The purposes of such discipline should be for:
 - i. The glory of God by reflecting His holy character. (Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12)
 - ii. The repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined. (Proverbs 15:5 ; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22)
 - iii. The instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them. (Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 (note – this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders); 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25)
 - iv. The purity of the Church as a whole. (1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 2:2)
 - v. The good of our corporate witness to non-Christians. (Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10)

 - b. Procedures shall be in harmony with Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1 as is appropriate. Differences that cannot be resolved will be initially handled by the Pastors and the Council or its designees. The Church will look to the Senior Pastor and the Council or its designees for the effective functioning and discipline of its members according to church discipline and restoration policy. Only after good-faith efforts by the Pastors and the Council to bring about repentance and reconciliation have proven futile shall the accused member be subjected to further Church discipline. Members agree that the Council may reject a member's request to terminate his/her membership once formal discipline proceedings have commenced.

 - c. If, after good-faith efforts by the Council to resolve and notification of the charges and hearing date and time before the Council or its designees with reasonable notice given, the Council or its designees determine by a three quarter (3/4) majority vote that the sin pattern of essential moral and/or biblical failure (for example Galatians 5:19-21) occurred, then it is serious enough for referral to the church membership for a simple majority vote as to termination and if the member will still not repent, then the member subject to termination will be notified in writing of the decision prior to his membership being terminated. At such

hearing mentioned above before the Council, the accused member may call to his aid any member of the Church as counsel. If he shall not present himself at the time appointed, or give satisfactory reasons for his neglect so to do, the Church may proceed in his absence. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but, should an adverse decision be reached, the Church may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the Church by a simple majority vote. If the Church member is disciplined by termination of membership, it will be announced to the members to carry out the Biblical admonitions to bring about repentance and restoration of the disciplined member.

- d. Restoration of any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be enacted by vote of the congregation upon evidence of their repentance and reformation as determined by the Pastors and the Council; or, if on account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERS' MEETINGS

A. Types of Meetings

1. **Worship Services:** The regular worship services of the Church shall be held on Sunday and at other times as determined by the Pastors in consultation with the Council. The Senior Pastor or an Associate Pastor shall direct the services for all the Church members and for all others who may choose to attend.
2. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once each quarter.
3. Revival services and other special services essential in the promotion of the objectives of the Church shall be placed on the Church calendar upon approval of the Senior Pastor and with approval of the Council.
4. **Business Meetings:** Regular Business Meetings of the congregation shall be held on the third Sunday of odd-numbered months, i.e., January, March, May, July, September and November. Financial statements will be published and available every month.
5. **Special Meetings:** A Special Meeting of the Church may be called at any time to consider matters requiring immediate attention. However, such meetings must be announced in a Sunday morning worship service at least two weeks in advance of the meeting and in the Church's electronic communication(s) in the week preceding the Special Meeting. Special Meetings may be called by any of the Pastors, the Council or Chairman of the Deacons.

- B. **Quorum:** In all Business Meetings, thirty Active Members, or twenty percent of the Active Roll, whichever is less, shall constitute a quorum; except those situations that require a greater than majority vote as stated in Article I.C.1.d. For these matters of exception, written or published notice shall be given to all possible members at least two weeks in advance of the business meeting and the quorum for these meetings shall be 50% of the Active Roll or 100 members, whichever is less. If a meeting cannot obtain the necessary quorum to transact business, then at the subsequent duly called meeting on that issue those members present and voting shall constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of business.

- C. Minutes: Minutes of the regular and special meetings shall be taken and kept according to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual for storage of Church information.

ARTICLE III: CHURCH GOVERNANCE

A. Pastors:

The Pastors shall consist of the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastors. The primary role of the Senior Pastor is the preaching and teaching ministries and prayer. (See 1 Tim. 5:12-17 and Ephesians 4:11-16.) Associate Pastors are supportive positions for more specific needs as described below.

1. Senior Pastor:

Definition: The office of pastor is defined by three different words in the New Testament that are all applied to the same office. For example, see 1 Peter 5:1-2: “So I exhort the *elders* among you, ...*shepherd* the flock of God that is among you, exercising *oversight*...”

- Elder: “*presbuteros*” Greek for “older” “senior”
- Pastor/Shepherd: “*poimen*” Greek for “shepherd” or “feed”
- Bishop/Overseer: “*episkopos*” Greek for “oversee” or “look diligently”

a. Senior Pastor Duties:

- i. Act as the supervisor of the Associate Pastors. See Titus 1:5. He shall do so as a servant leader, not exalted above other pastors, but having a distinct responsibility to them and for them to help them be successful in their specific pastoral role.
- ii. Set the direction of the Church in cooperation with the other Pastors. This involves devising and/or adopting strategies to develop and equip disciples to be the Church and to act as the Church in the world God has placed us. The Senior Pastor and other Pastors will work with the Council to apply these strategies.

b. Senior Pastor Personal Qualifications – Biblical: Based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

- i. above reproach
- ii. husband of one wife
- iii. sober-minded
- iv. self-controlled
- v. respectable
- vi. hospitable
- vii. able to teach
- viii. not a drunkard
- ix. not violent
- x. gentle
- xi. not quarrelsome
- xii. not a lover of money
- xiii. good manager at home
- xiv. in control of his children
- xv. not a recent convert
- xvi. well thought of outside of the Church

- c. Senior Pastor Additional Qualifications – Extra Biblical (not included in the Bible):
 - i. A personal testimony of salvation and God’s leading into the gospel ministry.
 - ii. Knowledge and sufficient experience in Baptist Church polity (common practices).
 - iii. Biblical model of ministry following 2 Timothy 2:2 “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”
 - iv. Agree with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church.
 - v. Exhibit a thorough knowledge and application of 1 Timothy 4:12 “...set the believers and example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” and 2 Timothy 2:15 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”
2. Associate Pastors:
- a. Additional Pastors shall be added at need and to the level that resources provide. While all Pastors should meet the qualifications and purposes of the Senior Pastor, they will be more specialized in their duties. The goal of having the Pastors is to more efficiently equip the saints for the work of ministry. The Pastors will act and serve in unity of spirit and purpose. The Pastors will also cooperate with the Council in the work of the Church.
 - b. Individual Pastors’ roles: Each of the men on the Pastoral Staff shall serve in specialized roles according to their individual gifts and callings to best meet the needs of the Church. The Pastors may be paid full-time or part-time, in accordance with responsibilities. Galatians 6:6 “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.”
- B. Pastors – Election and Departure:
- 1. Election: A pastoral position (Senior or Associate) shall be called by an affirmative secret ballot of three-fourths of those present and voting if the required quorum is met. Notice of such proposed action shall have been given according to protocol for special meetings in Article II. A.5. The Pastors may recommend to the Council the addition of more Pastors for the church. The proposed added positions will be approved by the congregation by following the procedure for calling a Pastor (see above).
 - 2. Departure:
 - a. Resignation: When a Pastor desires to resign, he shall submit his request in writing to the Council 30 days prior to its effective date.
 - b. Removal/Dismissal: Any member of the Pastoral Staff may be removed only by the members at a Special Called Meeting with an appropriate quorum. If the Church should dismiss a Pastor (Senior or Associate), this shall be done with a majority vote with proper notice of vote and appropriate quorum as required. Depending upon the length of service and conditions of the dismissal, the Pastor will be paid an appropriate severance package. The package will be determined by the Council and the Finance Committee and approved by the congregation. At the time of dismissal, the work of that Pastor will cease.
- C. Deacons:
- Deacons arose in the early New Testament Church to meet the need for special church servants. The biblical Greek word translated deacon is “*diakonos*”, whose more general meaning is “servant.” He must be a born-again, spirit-filled man who can testify to the call of God into the deacon ministry. The high qualifications for the Deacons in 1 Timothy 3 clearly indicate that the New Testament Church looked to these men not as rulers or authoritative leaders, but, rather as examples in Christian

living, service, and management. They are models both in their quality of life and in their active ministry. Deacons will help facilitate and offer encouragement to all Church ministries.

1. Deacon Qualifications:

- a. One who is dignified
- b. One who is not double-tongued
- c. One who is not given to much wine
- d. A man who is not greedy for money
- e. One who holds to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience
- f. One who is tested, and if above reproach, may serve
- g. A man who is a husband of one wife. (The Church interprets this Scripture literally; hence no divorced man may serve as a Deacon. Current Deacons that were ordained at Calvary Baptist Church that were divorced prior to their ordination will not have their ordination revoked. They will be allowed to continue serving as a Deacon.)
- h. A good manager of his children and his own household

2. Deacon Duty and Function:

There shall be Deacons as needed in accordance with the ministry needs of the Church. A Deacon is a great servant in the Church with an exemplary moral life and reputation in the community. The Deacons shall function as assistants to the Pastors in the ministries and programs of the Church.

3. Deacon Selection and Term of Office:

- a. The Pastors, in conjunction with the Council and the Deacons, shall nominate Deacons and submit a list to the membership for approval. The congregation shall vote by written ballot and the nominees receiving a majority vote shall be declared elected and move into active service. No person shall be considered a candidate for the office of Deacon until he has been a member of the Church for at least one year, demonstrates a servant's heart in the Church, and participates in beginner Deacon training.
- b. The Active Deacon term limit will be 4 years and then he will rotate onto the Inactive Deacon position for at least a one-year sabbatical. Ideally, no more than 25% of the Deacon body will rotate off each year. Inactive Deacons will retain their title of Deacon and therefore are still eligible for election to Council. Inactive Deacons can be reactivated to active service with nomination and approval in July. The Chairman of the Deacons will manage rotations of the Deacons.
- c. A Deacon may choose to take a sabbatical leave for periods of physical and spiritual rest and refreshment and be voluntarily moved to the Inactive Deacon list.
- d. The Deacons shall elect a Chairman annually from their own group.

- e. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the Church according to the membership roll.

4. Deacon Responsibilities:

- a. Setting an example as a disciple of Christ (Acts 6:3).
- b. Being faithful in practicing and teaching biblical concepts of time, talents, abilities and material possessions (1 Timothy 3:10).
- c. Cooperate with the Pastors, Council, Office Staff, Church leadership, and Church members in supporting and promoting the entire Church program (Acts 6:4).
- d. Be an example of witnessing (proclaim the gospel) to believers and unbelievers. (See examples of Stephen in Acts 6:8-7:60 and Philip in Acts 8:40).
- e. Minister to families in the Church (Acts 6:1-7).
- f. Provide input to the Pastors in areas related to the health and well-being of Church families (Acts 6:1-7).
- g. Additional duties not specifically assigned in the Bible:
 - i. Attend Deacon meetings and training sessions. Chronic un-approved absence may result in removal as a Deacon.
 - ii. Be involved and act as leaders in all Church ministries and programs.
 - iii. Assist the Pastors in serving the Lord's Supper.
 - iv. Assist the Pastors in baptism(s).
 - v. Assist the Pastors in altar calls.
 - vi. Assist in revising the Church roll annually.
 - vii. Oversee the collection of the weekly offerings.
 - viii. The Chairman of the Deacons will select two Deacons in January to serve on the Nominating Committee.

D. Pastors' Council (the Board of Directors):

Purpose: The Council is a special called group of Deacons who assist the Pastors in governing the Church. They assume the role of servants of God who serve the Church by assisting the Pastors through prayer, seeking the truth in the Bible, and walking in integrity before God. They assist the Pastors by hearing the plans of the Pastors and advising them to help come to a consensus of understanding of God's will for the Church. The Council will assist the Pastors in practical matters by applying church polity, assisting in Church discipline, settling disputes and resolving conflicts related to financial and personnel matters, recommending adjustments and changes to the Church organization while seeking counsel and assistance of Committees, Officers, and Ministry Leaders in the decision-making process. The Council will have oversight of all committees and officers elected by the Congregation to aid them in the ongoing work of the Church in ministry and administration. The work of the Council has as its ultimate aim the glory of God and the unity of peace.

1. General Powers:

The corporate powers of the Church shall be exercised by or under the authority of the Board of Directors, known as the Council, in cooperation with the Pastors and subject to the plenary powers of the congregation. The powers, business and property of the Church shall be exercised,

conducted and controlled by the Council for the purposes of every effort being made to oversee the affairs of the Church with unanimous agreement and to work in close cooperation with the Pastors. If, in the course of the decision-making processes, the Council cannot unanimously agree, then the decisions and recommendations will be made by a majority vote of the Council members present and voting at that meeting.

2. Council Relationships:

- a. To the Pastors: The relationship between the Council and the Pastors is one of fellowship, mutual respect, accountability, and assistance. The Council recognizes that the Pastors are called by God and spiritual leaders of the Church.
- b. To the Committees and Officers: The Council will rely heavily upon the Committees, Officers, and Ministry Leaders for their assistance and expertise in dealing with administrative and operational functions of the Church.
- c. To the Deacons: The Council members are Deacons and will minister alongside all Deacons while providing biblical advice and encouragement in our mutual labor in the Lord.
- d. To the Congregation: The Council will act as a liaison between the Church and the totality of the leadership of the Church. The Council will help communicate the vision, purpose, and goals to the Congregation at large. The Congregation will have the responsibility to pray for the Council as well as the Pastors. The Congregation will follow the leadership of the leaders of the Church. The Congregation of Calvary will always maintain the right to have their concerns and opinions heard.

3. Council Composition:

Seven Deacons elected by 2/3 of those members voting at a Called Business Meeting. It shall be a qualification of a Council member that he shall be willing to serve as a Director of the Church Corporation.

4. Council Selection:

The Pastors and the Council shall compile a list of nominees, selected from the Deacons, and present them to the Congregation at a scheduled Business Meeting in July.

5. Council Term of Service:

Term of Service: Members of the Council shall serve a term of three (3) years. The members of the Council shall be elected on a rotating basis in order to prevent all the Council members from leaving office at the same time. After rotating off the Council for one year, a replaced Council member may be eligible for re-election.

6. Council Officers:

Annually elected from among the Council.

- a. Chairman – to facilitate the meetings and plan the agenda in cooperation with the Pastors
- b. Vice-Chairman – administrative duties deemed appropriate by the Chairman and will serve as the Chair of the Nominating Committee
- c. Secretary – responsible for recording minutes and filing of minutes

7. **Council Vacancies:** A vacancy on the Council occurring for any cause may be filled by a qualified nominee selected by the Pastors and the Council and elected by a simple majority vote of the Congregation for the remainder of the unfulfilled term.
8. **Council Resignation or Removal:**
Any Council member may at any time deliver a written notice of intent to resign to the Senior Pastor, which shall be effective upon acceptance by the Church. Any Council member may be removed at any time with cause when it is determined by a simple majority vote of the Church at a duly called meeting. Once removed, a replacement may be elected by a majority vote to fill the vacancy at a future Business Meeting.
9. **Council Duties and Specific Powers:** Without prejudice to the general powers set forth above, and subject to the same limitations, the Council members shall have the following duties and powers:
 - a. Establishing governing principles, policies and practices for the daily functioning of the Church, including the creation and maintenance of a SOP Manual which shall contain all controlling policies and procedures governing any descriptions, policies regarding the handling of funds, use of facilities, and employment policies and practices.
 - b. Exercising oversight of the Church in financial, business and property matters.
 - c. Hearing, considering, and advising all reports and recommendations submitted by the Pastors, Council, Committees, and Office Staff.
 - d. Reviewing those who serve in Church leadership positions that the Nominating Committee will present for election to the Church.
 - e. Assisting the Pastors in the administration of the Church ordinances and ministries.
 - f. Assisting the Pastors for the discipline of erring members and their reconciliation upon repentance.
 - g. Determining the composition of the Pastors.
 - h. In cooperation with the Finance Committee, determine and approve the compensation for the Pastors. In cooperation with the Personnel Committee, determine and approve the compensation for the Administrative Staff.
 - i. Recommending borrowing money and incurring indebtedness on behalf of the Church and cause to be executed and delivered for the Church's purposes and in the Church's name, promissory notes and other evidences of debt and securities.
 - j. Conducting such other duties and activities as the Pastors and Council may determine that is consistent with the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, and these By-Laws including those actions requiring a vote of the Church membership.

The Council may delegate some of its authorities and duties to individual Deacons, the Pastors, Staff members, Committees, and others as long as the delegation does not breach its fiduciary duties to the Church. The Council may also invite the Chairpersons of the committees and organizations of the Church to be non-voting invitees to Council meetings whenever projects or programs in which their committee or organization may be involved are to be considered.

10. Council Transactions with Interested Parties: A contract or other transaction between the Church and one or more of its Council members, Deacons, Pastors or family members thereof (hereinafter “Interested Party”), or between the Church and any other entity, of which one or more of the Church or its Council members, Deacons, and Pastors are also Interested Parties, or in which entity is an Interested Party has a financial interest – shall be voidable at the sole election of the Church unless all of the following provisions are satisfied:
 - a. The Church entered into the transaction for its own benefit, the transaction was fair and reasonable as to the Church, or was in furtherance of its tax-exempt purposes at the time the Church entered into the transaction.
 - b. Prior to consummating the transaction, or any part, the Council authorized or approved the transaction, in good faith, by a vote of a majority of the Council then in office, without counting the vote of the interested Council member(s), and with knowledge of the material facts concerning the transaction and the Interested Parties’ interest in the transaction.
 - c. Prior to authorizing or approving the transaction, the Council, in good faith, determined after reasonable investigation and consideration, that either the Church could not have obtained a more advantageous arrangement, with reasonable effort under the circumstances, or the transaction was in furtherance of the Church’s tax-exempt purposes.
 - d. Common or interested Council members may not be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Council (or a committee thereof) which authorizes, approves, or ratifies such contract or transaction. Notwithstanding the above, no loan shall be made by the Church to any of its Council members, Chairpersons, Officers, Deacons or Pastors.
11. Conflicts of Interest Policy: The Council shall adopt a Conflicts of Interest Policy that will provide for full disclosure of material conflicting interests by Council members, Deacons, Officers, Pastors, and Employees. This Policy shall be represented by an endorsed document by each member listed above annually in September.
12. No Compensation for Council members: No salary or compensation shall be paid to any member of the Council in his capacity as a member of the Council, but nothing herein shall be construed to preclude any Council member from serving the Church in any other capacity and receiving reasonable compensation. Moreover, the Council member may receive reasonable reimbursement for travel and other approved expenses upon request and written documentation.
13. Council Additional Duties:
 - a. All Church business-related matters must be presented to the Pastors and the Council, receiving a unanimous vote from the Council before being presented to the Congregation for approval.
 - b. The Council shall handle matters in the hiring and dismissal of all Church paid positions and extended ministries of the Church in cooperation with the Pastors and Personnel Committee. The Council, after receiving input from the Pastors and Personnel Committee, shall make a final decision regarding the hiring of all employees/paid positions, and dismissal of all employees/paid positions except ordained pastors/ministers. The hiring or dismissal of any ordained minister shall be handled according to the guidelines written in the Church By-Laws (Article III. A. B).

- c. Re: Personnel Matters:
 - i. The Council will oversee all personnel matters related to the Pastors, reviewing annually the duties, responsibilities, and salaries of the Pastors. The Pastors may be excused from the Council meetings that involve the discussion on their salaries and review of their job performance. The Council shall employ the help of the Personnel Committee in the evaluation proceedings as deemed necessary. Recommendations will be submitted to the Church for approval.
 - ii. The Council shall conduct an annual review including a review of compensation of the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor(s), and the Personnel Team shall oversee annual reviews of all other Staff with all increases in compensation being reported to the Council for their approval.
- d. The Council is responsible for setting the agenda for the congregational Business Meetings.
- e. The Council will approve or disapprove church-wide collections.
- f. The Chairman of the Council shall be Moderator of the Church at Business Meetings. The Chairman may appoint a Moderator annually in September from the membership of the Church with the unanimous vote of the Council in cooperation with the Pastors.
- g. The Council and the Pastors, shall ensure that all contracts, deeds, mortgages, or other legal instruments are professionally reviewed, explained and appropriately acted upon when authorized by the Council and Congregation.
- h. Re: Partnerships, Joint Ventures, LLCs, and Auxiliary Corporations. The Council may authorize in writing any officer(s), or agent(s) of the Church to enter into any partnerships or joint ventures or create auxiliary corporations or limited liability companies that the Council determines will advance the religious purposes and goals of the members as described herein and not violate the Church's tax-exempt status, as provided for elsewhere within the Church By-Laws.
- i. The Council shall bring to the Church specific recommendations in regard to the proposed changes in the calls of Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor, which must be approved by the Members as outlined in these By-Laws.

E. Church Officers

- 1. The Officers of the Church shall be as follows (other positions may be created ad hoc):
 - a. Church Clerk:
The primary function of the Church Clerk is to keep an up-to-date roll of Church membership. Additional duties include:
 - i. To record and preserve accurate minutes of each Church Business Meeting which shall be read for approval at the succeeding meeting.
 - ii. To write for letters of persons transferring to the Church and to forward letters of dismissal when granted by the Church.
 - iii. To notify each member whose name has been removed from the Church Roll.
 - iv. To keep proper records and minutes of regular scheduled Church Business Meetings.

- b. Assistant Church Clerk:
The Assistant Church Clerk shall act in the absence of the Church Clerk and shall assist in such matters as are assigned by the Church Clerk.
 - c. Church Treasurer:
 - i. The Church Treasurer (“Treasurer”) shall be the custodian of all Church monies. The Treasurer shall keep a correct record of all receipts and expenditures. All bills shall be approved by the Finance Committee, or a designee of the Finance Committee, before being paid by the Treasurer except bills covering current expenses and salaries. Both Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall keep their records in such a way as to enable the auditor to annually audit the same with as little difficulty as possible. The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee. The Church shall provide bond for the Treasurer in adequate amount.
 - ii. Accounting Procedures: All funds received for any and all purposes shall be placed in the guardianship/responsibility of the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall oversee receipts, disbursements and maintenance of the Church's records. The Treasurer shall make a report to the Church at each bi-monthly Business Meeting. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer.
 - d. Assistant Church Treasurer:
The Assistant Church Treasurer shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the Treasurer, and act in the Treasurer’s absence.
 - e. Financial Secretary:
The duties of the Financial Secretary are to keep an accurate record of individual giving, to provide reports annually, or as requested for the givers, to prepare the envelopes for the coming year, and other duties as may be assigned by the Finance Committee. Financial records shall be secured and stored at the Church. His or her work shall be confidential.
 - f. Church Moderator:
The Chairman of the Council will be the Moderator or may appoint a Church Moderator from the membership of the Church with the unanimous vote of the Council and in agreement with the Pastors. Duties of the Church Moderator shall be to preside at all Business Meetings. The latest edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order* shall serve as a guide for the procedure to be followed. In the absence of the Church Moderator, the Chairman of the Council shall act as Church Moderator. The Church Moderator shall work with the Council and Pastors in preparing an agenda for Business Meetings. If either are not leading the meeting, the Church Clerk shall call the meeting to order, and a pro tem shall be elected for that meeting per *Robert’s Rules of Order*.
2. Election of Officers:
All Officers shall be members of this Church and shall be elected annually (with the exception of the Pastors) by a vote of the Church (except for salaried personnel). Election procedures for these are provided in the paragraphs outlining their duties. All Officers elected annually will assume their responsibilities on September 1 unless otherwise noted.

3. Filling a Vacancy:

In the event of a vacancy in an elective office before the regular annual meeting, the Church may fill the same by election at any Church Business Meeting from names presented by the Nominating Committee or nominations received from the floor.

ARTICLE IV: COMMITTEES

All Committees shall work under the direction and leadership of the Council in cooperation with the Pastors. They support the Council, providing administrative and organizational assistance. Chairmanship of Committees should never be expected or assumed. Chairmanship of all Committees shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of every committee.

A. Church Constitutional Committees are as follows: Budget/Finance, Personnel, Nominating, Counting, Building & Grounds and Pastor Search. Additional committees may be established on an as-needed basis.

1. Budget/Finance Committee

- a. Composition: 8 members, 2 of whom shall be elected annually for a term of four years. Members that cycle off the committee must remain off for 1 year prior to being considered for re-election.
- b. Duties:
 - i. To present a proposed budget to the Church at the November Business Meeting which shall be approved by the Church by a simple majority vote.
 - ii. To maintain a constant study of the financial needs of all organizations and phases of the Church work throughout the year and be responsible for leading the Church in a progressive and adequate financial program.
 - iii. To act on routine and minor financial matters not budgeted and make recommendations to the Church on all major financial matters.
 - iv. To allow the Chairman to appoint a sub-committee of three members to perform an internal audit of the Church Treasurer's books annually.

2. Personnel Committee

- a. Composition: 5 members which shall include at least one member of the Council and the Chairman of the Finance Committee.
- b. Duties:
 - i. Assist in selecting appropriate Support Staff and recommending them to the Church after having ascertained the appropriate salary and benefits package.
 - ii. Assist in ensuring that each Support Staff member's performance, along with their benefit package, is reviewed annually.
 - iii. Work with the Finance Committee to recommend appropriate salary changes to the Council. Personnel matters relating to the Pastors shall be handled by the Council.
 - iv. The 3 at-large members will be elected to serve 3-year alternating terms with one rotating off each year.

3. Nominating Committee

- a. **Composition:** Up to 5 at-large representatives selected by the Council, one Council member (the Vice-Chair of Council and will be deemed the Chairman of the Nominating Committee), and two Deacons selected by the Chairman of the Deacons. Length of term is one year and members are selected annually. These selections shall be presented at the July Business Meeting and the term starts the following September.
- b. **Duties:**
 - i. Make recommendations/nominations for all needed ministries. This will be done in cooperation with the Pastors and the Council. These needs may include committee members, ministry leaders, teachers, and all positions listed on the Opportunity for Service Form disseminated to the church congregation. All nominations for service positions will be presented by the June Council Meeting (except those whose appointment is provided for elsewhere in the Constitution). Major reports shall be printed and distributed at least by the Sunday before the July Business Meeting.
 - ii. The Pastors are responsible for outlining the Church's personnel needs to the Nominating Committee. Procedures for staffing these needs are outlined in the SOP Manual.
 - iii. If there is a need for a Pastor Search Committee, the Nominating Committee will be tasked with nominating five at large nominees and presenting them to the Pastors and Council for approval prior to a congregational vote. Additional details stated in Article IV. A. 6.

4. Counting Team

The Church Treasurer will nominate a Counting Team to assist in counting monies received. This team will be approved by the Council.

5. Building & Grounds

- a. **Composition:** 7 members. There shall be a Chairman and Vice Chair to be elected annually each September by members of the Buildings & Grounds Committee.
- b. **Duties:**
 - i. General oversight for the upkeep and care of all Church property.
 - ii. The Committee shall be responsible for the purchase of all needed general maintenance supplies.
 - iii. For any repairs, new work, or equipment not covered by the present budget, the Chairman shall consult the Council.

6. Pastor Search Committee (Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor)

The Pastor Search Committee is an ad hoc committee and shall consist of 7 members. One shall be a Deacon not currently on Council and one shall be a Deacon on the Council—both will be selected by the Pastors and Council. When there is a need for such a Committee, the Nominating Committee will present five at large nominees to the Pastors and Council for final approval and then taken to the Church for a vote. The Pastor Search Committee shall seek out a pastor whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office of Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor of this Church in accordance with 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The Pastor Search Committee shall bring only one name at a time for consideration, and no consideration will be given to anyone who is not

first recommended by the Pastor Search Committee. In making a selection, members should individually pray and seek God's will as well as consider input from the Pastors on Staff. Should a candidate recommended by the Committee fail to receive a three-fourths vote, the meeting shall be adjourned, and the Pastor Search Committee will resume their efforts.

ARTICLE V: FINANCIAL MATTERS

A. Finances:

1. The Church shall follow faith principles with reference to funds needed for the support of its ministries, looking to the Lord to supply the needs through His people in the Church. The support of the Church shall be by tithes, offerings, and gifts.
2. The Church will operate within a budget.
3. Gifts and contributions: The Council may accept, on behalf of the Church, any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the general purpose or for any special purpose of the Church. Any endowment for the general purpose or for any special purpose of the Church will be approved by the Council.

B. Deposits: The Budget/Finance Committee shall select banks, trust companies, or other depositories in which all funds of the Church not otherwise employed shall, from time to time, be deposited to the credit of the Church.

C. Checks: All checks or demands for money and notes of the Church shall be signed by authorized signers or such other persons as the Council may designate as needed.

D. Fiscal Year: The Council, in consultation with the Budget/Finance Committee, shall have the power to change the fiscal year of the Church. Unless otherwise changed by the Council, the fiscal year shall be the calendar year. Accurate records shall be kept by all organizations of the Church and reports made on the fiscal year basis. All funds handled by any and all organizations shall be reported to the Council.

E. Contracts: The Senior Pastor and Chairman of the Council, together, may bind the Church if authorized by the appropriate authorities, but the Council may also authorize any Officer or Officers, Agent or Agents of the Church, in addition to the Officers so authorized by these By-Laws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of, and on behalf of the Church, including real estate transactions. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized, no Officer, Agent, or Employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Church to any contract or any engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable for any purpose or in any amount.

F. Purchase or sale of property and borrowing: Neither Pastors nor Officers of the Church may purchase or sell real or personal property on behalf of the Church unless authorized by the Council, and in cases of real property, the Members according to these By-Laws. Any borrowing of money must be approved by the Council members according to Article II. D. 9.i.

G. Income:

1. The Church members will support the Church with tithes and offerings. Offering envelopes will be made available for Members' use. It is understood that membership in this Church involves financial obligation to support the Church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts and offerings.
2. All tithes and offerings and gifts will be counted by the Counting Team and turned over to the Church Treasurer.
3. Designated Contributions: The Church may accept any designated contribution, gift, bequest or devise provided it is consistent with the Church's:
 - a. Mission and spiritual priorities as determined and communicated by the Pastors and Council.
 - b. Budget process and fiscal restrictions.
 - c. Full ownership and control of the funds or assets, and tax-exempt purposes as set forth in the Constitution. As so limited, donor designated contributions will be accepted for special funds, purposes or uses, and such designations will generally be honored, but do not have to be so honored at the full discretion of the Church. The Church shall reserve all rights, title and interests in and to the control of such contributions as well as full discretion as to the ultimate expenditure or distribution thereof in connection with any special fund, purpose or use. When the Church is unable to honor a designation, the Church as represented by Council and the Finance Committee may, (a) contact the donor to change his or her designation, (b) use these funds for any other special purpose or general use, or (c) return the contribution to the donor, all of which is in the full discretion of the Church.

H. Expenditures: Budgeted items may be spent without further action by the Church providing the income of the Church meets the needs of the budget. All questions relative to the expenditures of the monies not provided for in the Church budget for any amount must come as a recommendation to the Finance Committee. Once it is discussed by the Finance Committee, if the money is available, the matter will then be presented to the Council for approval and then the Church at a regular Business Meeting for action. Any money received in excess of the budget demand will be expended by a vote of the Church Congregation upon recommendation from the Finance Committee.

I. Financial Plan:

1. The Church shall operate within sound financial accounting and budgetary procedures, and as further described in the By-Laws.
2. The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all expenses.
3. There shall be an annual financial review and/or audit as recommended by the Budget/Finance Committee and approved by the Council, but there shall be an audit at least every five years by an outside auditor.

- J. Benevolence Fund: Consistent with biblical teaching to share with those in need, the Church will establish a Benevolence Fund to meet material and financial needs of its members and others. The Pastors have the ability to allocate money from the Benevolence Fund budget at their discretion for needs that are consistent with the fund's purpose. Once these funds are utilized, the Pastor(s) responsible for the allocation must report to the Council at the next scheduled Council meeting. Any desired funding that exceeds the Benevolence Fund budget must be approved by the Council prior to disbursement.

ARTICLE VI: MINISTRIES

The Council shall oversee and help facilitate all Church ministries and ministry teams. These ministries will include both internal Church ministries and external mission outreach programs. A vital part of our purpose as a Church is our service to one another and to our world through various ministries. The Church, Pastors, Committees and Officers provide the necessary platform and structure to perform ministry. The governmental, organizational, and administrative part of the Church offers direction and accountability for our main purpose for existence: ministry. We define ministry as "divine resources meeting human needs through loving channels to the glory of God." To do biblical ministry, we must (1) recognize the divine resources available to us, (2) compassionately see the human needs around us, and (3) become available channels of God's mighty resources resulting in God alone receiving the glory.

Ministries will continually change as God provides the needed resources, increasing numbers of Christian workers, and various spiritual gifts. We must not set limits or establish human boundaries on how God may choose to use the Church to build His glorious Kingdom.

Ministries must operate in accordance to the biblical principles set forth by our ministry definition, stated above. Descriptions of the various ministries presently in operation at the Church are available in our SOP Manual.

ARTICLE VII: BIBLICAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- A. In any dispute arising between or among Church Members, the dispute may be resolved by the Pastors and Council (or a duly appointed committee from the Council) under the *Rules and Procedures for Christian Conciliation* published at www.ICCPeace.com. All Employees of the Church shall sign policies or contracts with the Christian Dispute Resolution clause in it. All contractors and vendors of the Church should be asked to sign policies or contracts with the Christian Dispute Resolution clause in it.
- B. Any dispute between a member and the Church, or its agents in their representative capacity, shall be resolved through Christian conciliation. Christian mediation should be attempted but if it does not resolve the dispute then legally binding Christian Arbitration shall be employed by the Council or individuals selected by the Council in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* found at www.ICCPeace.com. A decision shall be reached after prayerful consideration, in a spirit of humility, with each Arbitrator seeking that which most glorifies God and regarding one another before himself.
- C. Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. Jurisdiction and venue shall be the county and state where the church is located, and Virginia law shall apply to the dispute. Members, Pastors, Office Staff or third-party vendors/contractors shall

understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising against the Church and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another or the Church for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision. In that case, judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered by any court having competent jurisdiction, in conformity with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Notwithstanding this above provision, to protect the Church and its Members and under its risk policy procedures, the Church is required to maintain liability insurance. Therefore, this conflict provision is conditioned upon agreement by the Church's insurers that, in light of the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the disputed matter, this provision, and the process it establishes, shall not diminish any insurance coverage maintained by the Church.

Article VIII: IDEMNIFICATION

Any person made or threatened to be made a party to any action or proceeding, whether civil or criminal by reason of the fact that he or his testator is or was a Pastor, Deacon, Officer, Employee or Agent of the Church, may be indemnified by the Church, and the Church may advance his related expenses, to the full extent permitted by law. The Church may purchase and maintain insurance to indemnify: (a) itself for any obligation which it incurs as a result of the indemnification specified above; and (b) its Pastors, Deacons, and Officers.

ARTICLE IX: CHURCH STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL

- A. The Church Articles of Incorporation, Constitution and By-Laws forms the general foundation and structure for the administration and government of the Church. A separate document called the SOP Manual provides detailed information for the operation and function of the Church.
- B. Review and Modification to the SOP Manual.
 - 1. The Church shall maintain and utilize a Church SOP Manual to include Church policies, rules of procedure, personnel policies, job descriptions, and organizational charts depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the Church.
 - 2. The Council or a special committee created by the Council shall review the SOP Manual at least annually in June and has the authority to make changes as needed. Any Church Member or Church organization may suggest changes to the SOP Manual to Council for consideration.
 - 3. The SOP Manual shall be kept in the Church Office and made available for use by any Member of the Church.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS

Members may propose changes to these By-Laws that shall be submitted to the Council for consideration and comment. The Council may, after review, present the proposed changes and comments to the Church at a Special Business Meeting. These By-Laws may be amended by a three-quarters (3/4) vote of the members present and voting, provided that the proper quorum is present, and the following procedures have been followed:

- 1. The proposed written amendment has been presented at a previous Business Meeting.

2. The proposed amendment has been mailed or made available to the membership at least 4 weeks before the meeting to act on the amendment.
3. The proposed amendment has been announced on a previous Sunday morning at least 2 weeks before the vote is taken.

I, the undersigned Clerk of the Church of Staunton do hereby certify that the above Constitution and By-Laws were adopted on September 10, 2023 by the Church members at a duly called meeting and that this Constitution and By-Laws are current and in operation as of that time.

Church Clerk

Date

THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE

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 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.



NASHVILLE

STATEMENT

A COALITION FOR BIBLICAL SEXUALITY

*“Know that the LORD Himself is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves...”
-Psalm 100:3*

Preamble

Evangelical Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century find themselves living in a period of historic transition. As Western culture has become increasingly post-Christian, it has embarked upon a massive revision of what it means to be a human being. By and large the spirit of our age no longer discerns or delights in the beauty of God’s design for human life. Many deny that God created human beings for his glory, and that his good purposes for us include our personal and physical design as male and female. It is common to think that human identity as male and female is not part of God’s beautiful plan, but is, rather, an expression of an individual’s autonomous preferences. The pathway to full and lasting joy through God’s good design for his creatures is thus replaced by the path of shortsighted alternatives that, sooner or later, ruin human life and dishonor God.

This secular spirit of our age presents a great challenge to the Christian church. Will the church of the Lord Jesus Christ lose her biblical conviction, clarity, and courage, and blend into the spirit of the age? Or will she hold fast to the word of life, draw courage from Jesus, and unashamedly proclaim his way as the way of life? Will she maintain her clear, counter-cultural witness to a world that seems bent on ruin?

We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it—particularly as male and female. Christian Scripture teaches that there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all. To him alone, every person owes glad-hearted thanksgiving, heart-felt praise, and total allegiance. This is the path not only of glorifying God, but of knowing ourselves. To forget our Creator is to forget who we are, for he made us for himself. And we cannot know ourselves truly without truly knowing him who made us. We did not make ourselves. We are not our own. Our true identity, as male and female persons, is given by God. It is not only foolish, but hopeless, to try to make ourselves what God did not create us to be.

We believe that God’s design for his creation and his way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God’s good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ’s church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

Article 1

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church.

WE DENY that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract rather than a covenant made before God.

Article 2

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage.

WE DENY that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any form of sexual immorality.

Article 3

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female.

WE DENY that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

Article 4

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing.

WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

Article 5

WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God's design for self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

Article 6

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about "eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb." With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known.

WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person's biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

Article 7

WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God's holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture.

WE DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God's holy purposes in creation and redemption.

Article 8

WE AFFIRM that people who experience sexual attraction for the same sex may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as they, like all Christians, walk in purity of life.

WE DENY that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God's original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

Article 9

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality—a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality.

WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behavior.

Article 10

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness.

WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.

Article 11

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak the truth in love at all times, including when we speak to or about one another as male or female.

WE DENY any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonor God's design of his image-bearers as male and female.

Article 12

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

Article 13

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender self-conceptions and by divine forbearance to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions that are at odds with God's revealed will.

Article 14

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ's death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are available to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as Savior, Lord, and supreme treasure.

WE DENY that the Lord's arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond his reach.

Scripture References*

Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-24; Ex. 20:14; 20:17; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Dt. 5:18, 21; 22:5; Jdg. 19:22; 2 Sam. 11:1-12:15; Job 31:1; Ps. 51:1-19; Prov. 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; Isa. 59:1; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 5:27-30; 19:4-6, 8-9, 12; Acts 15:20, 29; Rom. 1:26-27; 1:32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 18-20; 7:1-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 4:15, 20-24; 5:31-32; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; 1 Tim. 1:9-10, 15; 2 Tim. 2:22; Titus 2:11-12; Heb. 13:4; Jas. 1:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:11; Jude 7

* Scripture texts are not a part of the original document but have been added subsequently for reference

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