

BYLAWS OF WEST MEADOWS BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.

ARTICLE 1 NAME AND PURPOSE

SECTION 1.01 - NAME

This congregation of believers shall be known as West Meadows Baptist Church, Inc. This church is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Florida.

SECTION 1.02 - PURPOSE

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) of 1986, for such purposes including, but not limited to, proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; establishing and maintaining religious worship; educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, and maintaining missionary activities in the United States and around the world.

ARTICLE 2 STATEMENT OF FAITH

SECTION 2.01 - AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the statement of faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members, staff, and volunteers. All literature, whether print or electronic, used in the church shall be in agreement with the statement of faith. All activities permitted or performed in any facilities owned, rented, or leased by this church, or engaged in by any member of the church staff (volunteer or paid), and all decisions of the administration of this church shall not conflict with the statement of faith. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of the statement of faith, the **pastors and deacons**, on behalf of the church, have the final authority.

SECTION 2.01 - STATEMENT OF FAITH

A. The Holy Scriptures.

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God in its origin (the original manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic & Greek.)

We believe the Old and New Testament Scriptures are the inspired Word of God in the original words and in the full scope of Scripture's writings. The scriptures were inspired in the original manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible, and God-breathed, and are therefore the final authority for faith and life. The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning.

Since English is a living language where word's meanings can change we believe it is important to use a translation which has proven to be accurate and trustworthy. One such translation is the King James Version. It is the preferred version of the church. Other good translations include the New American Standard Version and the New King James Version.

Since English is a living language, the meanings of words can change over time. Because of this, we believe it is important to use proven translations that are good, accurate, and trustworthy. Good, accurate, and trustworthy translations include the King James Version, The English Standard Version, and the New American Standard Version.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

- B. The Godhead.** We believe in the one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit – each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, coequal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 14:10, 26; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

1. The Person and Work of God the Father

a. We believe that God is infinite and beyond the scope of human comprehension. He stands alone in power, holiness, wisdom, and self-existence.

b. We believe God can be known through his revelation to man. God reveals himself in his word through his attributes, perfections, names, and works.

c. We believe God is uncreated, all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-present, existing beyond the limits of creation, time, and space.

(Gen. 1:1, Hebrews 1:1; John 17)

2. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

- a. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (Isaiah. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Galatians 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8)
- a. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Romans 3:24-25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 Peter 2:24)
- b. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2)

3. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

- a. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13-14)
- b. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who indwells believers at the moment of salvation and assists them to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the responsibility of all Christians to maintain a Spirit-filled life. (Ephesians 1:17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27)

- c. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer.
We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the church in order that they can do the work of the ministry. (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28; Ephesians 4:7-12)
- d. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing.
Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit. The ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness and/or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection. God does frequently choose to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing according to His good pleasure and according to His divine plan. (1 Corinthians 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22)

C. The Total Depravity of Man. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-19)

D. Salvation. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (Matthew 12:31-32; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:9)

E. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.

1. We believe that once a person is saved, he is kept by God's power and remains secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 1:4-5)
2. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

Now covered in G - Personal Holiness & F6 – The Church

F. The Church.

- 1. We believe that the local church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again believers. (I Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27)**
- 2. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament. (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11)**
- 3. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or controls, and any affiliations, societies, organizations, associations, or agencies this church affiliates with to further the objectives stated in the Purpose Statement are not authoritative in matters of church practice or belief. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-32; 20:28; Romans 16:1, 4; 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16; 5:4-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4)**
- 4. We recognize water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 8:36-38; I Corinthians 11:23-26)**
- 5. We are opposed to movements that emphasize an unequal yoke with unbelievers' experience over Biblical truth, progressive Christianity, which weakens the inerrancy of the Scriptures, social gospel, including critical theory, and any other beliefs that abandon Biblical Christianity.**
"We are opposed to movements that disproportionately emphasize individual experience over Biblical truth. This inversion undermines the authority of the Scriptures and elevates the authority of the self. Some modern-day manifestations of this error include Progressive Christianity, The Social Gospel, Critical Theories, and any other beliefs or systems that abandon Biblical Christianity."
- 6. We believe the church should separate from religious apostasy, false teachers, false gospels, and endeavor to maintain the integrity of Biblical Orthodoxy in all of the church's teaching. We believe in the individual priesthood of the believer and call all members to weigh the content of the teaching and preaching against the measure of God's Holy Word.**
(Matthew 7:15-20; Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1-3)

G. Separation. We believe that believers should maintain a godly testimony and live in such a way that their lives do not bring reproach upon their Savior. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy, all unworldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations. We endeavor to pursue modesty and appropriateness in daily Christian living.

Personal Holiness We believe that believers are called to be in the world but not of the world. We are to be living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. We are to walk in new life, resist conformity to the world's patterns of thinking and living, and pursue Christ-likeness in all our ways. We believe that spiritual holiness is pursued in the mind and in the body.

(Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17)

H. Eschatology. We believe in the blessed hope, the personal, imminent return of Christ Who will rapture His church. We believe Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly, Messianic Kingdom, which was promised to Israel. While there are varying views as to the timing and sequence of these events, we hold the historical pre-tribulation, pre-millennial view of eschatology. (Psalm 89:3-4; Daniel 2:31-45; Zechariah 14:4-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

We believe in the blessed hope, that Jesus will return to establish his earthly kingdom, that all things will be made new, the curse of sin finally will be eradicated, the wicked one will be destroyed, and salvation will be fully realized.

There are several systems that seek to explain and order the timing and sequence of these events. None is perfect and all have their strengths and weaknesses. These things are still to come, and we look forward to God's plan in God's time with great hope.

(Psalm 89:3-4; Zechariah 14:4-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 19-22)

I. The Eternal State.

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-6, 12-13)
2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6)
3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment. (Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15)

J. The Personality of Satan. We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10)

K. Creation. We believe that the Genesis account of creation is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of God's creation of the universe in six literal, twenty-four hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11)

L. Civil Government. We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. We believe that we must obey the state unless it requires us to act contrary to our faith at which time we must obey God rather than the state. (Matthew 22:15-22; Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; Titus 3:1-2; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 2:13-14)

M. Family Relationships.

1. We believe that men and women both display the image of God and are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and elders) of the church. (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the spiritual leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a wonderful gift and heritage from the Lord.
Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate training and discipline. Parents are responsible for the discipleship of their children, as they raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Parents are to intentionally lead their children through spiritual formation, a Biblical worldview, spiritual teaching and instruction, a godly example, and appropriate training and discipline.
(Genesis 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 127:3-5; 22:15; Mark 10:6-12; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Peter 3:1-7)
3. In the Bible, God entrusts parents with responsibility for their children, and church activities and Christian schools by design operate on behalf of the parents. These responsibilities include decisions regarding church attendance, education, healthcare, discipline, and a variety of other life choices. God instructs parents to train their children consistent with their faith. (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 4:6, 6:6-9; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 4:20-23, 19:18, 22:6; Ephesians 6:4)

N. Marriage and Sexuality.

1. We believe that the term “marriage” has only one legitimate meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one naturally born man and one naturally born woman in a single, covenantal union as delineated by Scripture. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility or space owned, leased, or rented by this church will be only those ceremonies sanctioned by God. Whenever there is a conflict between the church’s position and any new legal standard for marriage, the church’s statement of faith, doctrines, and biblical positions will govern. (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:22-23; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Corinthians 7:1-9)

2. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage as defined in (a) above. We believe that any other type of sexual activity, identity, or expression that lies outside of this definition of marriage, including those that are becoming more accepted in the culture and the courts, are contradictory to God's natural design and purpose for sexual activity. (Genesis 2:24; 19:5; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1: 26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4)
3. We believe that God creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, unchangeable genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and the rejection of one's biological gender, whether by speech, dress, and/or surgery, is a rejection of the image of God within that person. (Genesis 1:26-27)

O. Divorce and Remarriage.

We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce except in cases of adultery. We believe that marriage is sacred, and that divorce should only be considered as a means of last resort for the protection of abused individuals, in the wake of adultery, or when the believing party has done all in their power to pursue peace.

We believe that two believers should be able to dwell together in unity and the bond of peace as the Spirit works through the Word in their hearts.

While each situation is unique, we understand that the reality of a fallen world means that brokenness impacts our homes and families. However, we believe there is hope and healing in the grace of God. We encourage each person to pursue God's plan regardless of their past pain, struggles, or circumstances.

Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or

board member.
deacon.

(Malachi 2:14-17; Matthew 19:3-12; Mark 10:11-12; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16)

P. Sanctity of Life.

1. We believe that human life begins at conception and that any unborn child is a living human being created in the image of God and must be valued and protected. (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:36,

2. We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. The intentional act or omission that facilitates premature death, including abortion, is assuming a decision that is to be reserved for God. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. We do not believe that discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome is euthanasia. (Exodus 20:13; 23:7; Matthew 5:21; Acts 17:28)
3. Because human life begins at conception, we believe that the IVF (In Vitro Fertilization) industry is largely opposed to Biblical ethics and teachings. We urge all families to consider the value and protection of all people; including embryos.

- Q. Protection of Children.** We believe that children are from the Lord and must be absolutely protected within the church from any form of abuse or molestation. The church has zero tolerance for any person, whether paid staff, volunteer, member, or visitor, who abuses or molests a child. (Psalm 127:3-5; Matthew 18:6, 19:14; Mark 10:14)
- R. Love.** We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means of resolving personal actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Philippians 2:2-4; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18)
- S. Disputes within the Church.** We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32; Matthew 18:15-17)
- T. Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ, we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts

1:8; 2 Corinthians 1:20)

U. Giving. We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to financially support their local church. Consequently, we believe giving is an act of worship and that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give their offerings **regularly**, sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of his tithe or offering once the gift has been made. (Genesis 14:20; Proverbs 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Galatians 6:6; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)

V. Music. We believe music is a moral language given by God and governed by rules of composition and harmony. It employs sounds with varied durations, dynamics and timbre. Music strongly influences our character, thoughts, behavior, emotions and lifestyles. It has the power to change the way we see things as well as transform our senses and understanding. Therefore, we purpose to use only music that glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. The corporate singing of Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are a part of our worship.

Worship.

1. We believe that, for the believer, all of life is worship to the Lord. Further, the weekly gathering of the saints is a time to pursue that worship as a body of believers together. We seek to worship the Lord through preaching, singing, praying, studying, fellowship, giving, serving, and the ordinances.
2. We purpose to use music in our services that is theologically accurate, instructive, formative, singable, and moving. Our desire is that our singing together as a church exalts the worth of our God and is a taste of our worship for eternity to come.

(Ephesians 5:19-20; Colossians 3:16)

SECTION 2.03 - COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by divine grace to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and having been baptized as a profession of our faith in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as members of West Meadows Baptist Church.

- We will pursue a love for God and a love for others as the primary tenants of the faith.
(Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 John 4:7-12; Ephesians 4:2; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8-10; 1 John 3:23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 5)
- We will work together for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
(1 Corinthians 12:25; 2 Corinthians 13:11)
- We will uphold the faith once delivered for all the saints by pursuing together the worship of God, the preeminence of the Word, a personal commitment to share the Gospel, and discipleship within the family of the local church.
(Psalm 96:9; Psalm 119; Matthew 28:18-20; Jude 3)
- We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. (Hebrews 10:25)

- We will pray for, care for, watch over, encourage, admonish, and entreat one another in love and humility, as is fitting for the members of a local Christian church. (James 5:16; 1 Corinthians 12:25; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:2; 5:21; Galatians 5:13, 26; 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; Hebrews 10:24; 1 Peter 5:5)
- We will endeavor to bring up those in our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and to pursue Christ-likeness in our homes and with our families. (Psalm 127; Proverbs 31; Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4; 1 Peter 3:1-7)
- We will rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep, seeking to bear one another's burdens. (Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:15)
- We will seek by Divine aid to live carefully in this world, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to walk in newness of life, personal holiness, integrity, self-control, righteousness, and godliness.

ARTICLE 3

MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 3.01 - QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Those seeking membership must, through their actions, words, lifestyle, and affiliations, evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

- A. They must renounce sin and endeavor to live a life wholly consecrated unto the Lord.
- B. Candidates for membership will be required to attend and complete the Foundations of our Faith pre-membership class led by a member of the pastoral staff, in which they will study the Statement of Faith, the bylaws of this church, church ministries, and expectations of members.
Candidates for membership will be required to attend and complete the "Foundations of our Faith" pre-membership class led by a member of the pastoral staff, in which they will study the Bylaws, Statement of Faith, the Church Covenant, the church ministries, and expectations of members.
- C. At the conclusion of the class, the candidates be interviewed by one of
the pastoral staff and/or the deacons
the pastors

prior to being recommended for membership to ensure they fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith contained herein and agree to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders.

- D.** After such recommendation, membership will be granted upon a majority vote of the members present at any church service or meeting, and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:
- 1.** By baptism(immersion) at this local church following a profession of faith as a believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;
 - 2.** By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized by immersion subsequent to a profession of faith;
 - 3.** By testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion in another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice; or
 - 4.** By restoration, if having been removed from membership, upon majority vote of the congregation after confession is made publicly before the church membership of the sin or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance to a pastor (or body of deacons if the office of pastor is vacant)

SECTION 3.02 - PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- A.** Only members at least eighteen years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. The eligible membership of the church has certain limited areas to exercise a vote. Members may not vote to initiate any church action, but rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the pastors and the Shepherding Ministry Team. When a minor turns 18, they will be required to follow the same procedures for membership set forth in Section 3.01 (A-D).
- B.** This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastors as the under-shepherds with the counsel of the Shepherding Ministry Team. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures.

The deacons along with the Shepherding Ministry Team shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of the church in addition to giving counsel and assistance to the pastor. the deacons and Shepherding Ministry Team shall serve under the oversight of the pastors/elders in all matters pertaining to church ministry.

- C. Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastors (or in their absence, the chairman of the deacons) have the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor (the chairman of the deacons), be treated as a trespasser.
- D. A member, upon five-business days prior written request made upon the church, may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church, the minutes of the proceedings of the quarterly business meetings, and the minutes of the proceedings of Shepherding Ministry Team meetings.

A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, the list of names and addresses of the church members, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.

SECTION 3.03 - DUTIES OF A MEMBER

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to the covenant contained in Article 2, Sections 2.02 and 2.03, each one further agrees to love, honor, and esteem the pastors; to pray for him; to recognize his authority in the spiritual and day-to-day affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to faithfully support the church in attendance, prayer, tithes, offerings and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with Biblical commands, to support through a lifestyle walk affirming the beliefs and practices of the church.

Members, upon, approval by a congregational majority, agree to actively live out Section 2.03; the Church Covenant, before the sight of God and their brothers and sisters in the faith.

SECTION 3.04 - DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER

- A. Grounds:** Discipline is an exercise for which the church is responsible. The purpose of discipline is to promote repentance and restoration through exposing sinful behavior. It is redemptive in nature as well as corrective. Any member of this church is subject to discipline on the basis of unscriptural conduct or doctrinal departure from the Statement of Faith, Polity, Constitution and Bylaws and any amendment thereto and/or other rules set forth by the leadership of the church. This section does not involve the disciplining or dealing with the employees of the church regarding employment issues. The personnel manual of the church addresses those matters. (Matthew 16:19; 18:15-20; Luke 17:3; John 20:23; Acts 16:4; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 10-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 3:10-11; Hebrews 13:17)
- B. Procedure:** All matters of church discipline are to be handled by the deacons and the pastors. These men shall have sole authority in determining unscriptural conduct, heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith, Polity, Constitution and Bylaws as well as any amendment or other rules set forth by church leadership. If the a pastor or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall temporarily step aside from his position of authority until the matter is resolved. The pastors and deacons shall be subject to the same disciplinary steps as other church members as defined in steps 1-4.
1. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. He should also go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.
 2. After step one has been followed, if reconciliation is not reached, the member seeking to resolve the matter is to submit a letter to the deacon body so that a deacon and/or his wife can accompany them in an effort to resolve the matter. No member of the church shall have the right to accuse any member of the church publicly. This second step should also be preceded by prayer and self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
 3. If the matter is still unresolved after the first two steps have been taken, the deacons shall meet with the a pastor and designate a minimum of three deacons church leaders to accompany the pastor in personally meeting with the offending member and seek that member's restoration.

4. If the matter is still unresolved after steps one through three have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church upon a majority vote of the membership present at the next scheduled business meeting.

SECTION 3.05 - TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Members, not under the disciplinary process of Section 3.04, may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church of like faith.

SECTION 3.06 - TERMINATION AND RESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months. Upon good cause being shown to the deacons and pastors, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the deacons and/or pastors. (Such examples would include elderly, shut-in or medically ill members, members in the armed forces serving outside of Jacksonville, and college students away from home.
- B. No member of this church may hold membership in another church. If any member unites in membership with another church, that person is automatically terminated without with notice from membership in this church.
- C. Termination for any areas of misconduct or doctrinal disagreement with the statement of faith will follow the pattern of church discipline mentioned in section 3.04.
- D. The membership of any individual members shall automatically terminate without notice if the deacons or pastors become aware of a member's open and unrepentant involvement in any sexual misconduct or if a member files a lawsuit in violation of Section 2.02.
- E. The membership of any individual shall automatically terminate without notice if the member openly and unashamedly disagrees with any provision found in the Statement of Faith.
- F. The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member in a spirit of dissension actively engages in secretive discussions and/or intentionally organized, secretive meetings in a concerted effort to overthrow the pastor or present church leadership.

- G. The membership of an individual will automatically terminate upon his or her death.
- H. No provision contained in this section shall be subject to or governed by the procedures regarding discipline of members set forth in Section 3.04.
- I. A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the pastor.
- J. A member may resign at any time, and letters will be granted at the discretion of the church leadership.

SECTION 3.07 - AFFILIATED CO-LABORER

Those desiring fellowship, accountability and opportunities for service with this church on a temporary basis but who maintain membership in a like body of believers outside this locality may be granted affiliated co-laborer status with this church. The affiliated co-laborer may be eligible to serve in certain capacities determined by the pastor and board and may attend member fellowship events. This affiliation does not, however, grant membership or the rights of membership to the individual(s) so affiliated. Affiliated co-laborers shall not be entitled to hold any office, vote in, or have any say in any church matter, and shall not be counted for quorum purposes. A person wishing to become an affiliated co-laborer with this church must make a request to the pastor or his designee who will determine if affiliated co-laborer status should be granted to the individual. If the pastor or his designee so determines, the person may be granted co-laborer status upon a majority vote of the deacons.

SECTION 3.07 – TEMPORARY MEMBERSHIP

Temporary Membership is a solution for those desiring to serve and have fellowship and accountability for an agreed upon amount of time. This arrangement is suitable for long-term travel, or interim positions.

Temporary members may serve on ministry teams, but may not be in a leadership position higher than “Team Captain.” Temporary members may teach at the discretion of the pastors.

Temporary members should follow the same membership process, and be voted on by the congregation.

Article 4

Officers

SECTION 4.01 - CHURCH OFFICERS

The church officers are pastors, deacon, church clerk, financial secretary, and church treasurer bookkeeper. One person may hold two or more offices, with some exceptions. The church treasurer bookkeeper and financial secretary may not be the same person, and the pastors may not hold any other offices. Officers of the church must be elected by a majority of the present, voting membership at the quarterly church business meeting. The senior pastor, from time to time as he deems appropriate, may appoint other church officers, subject to a majority confirmation vote by present, voting church members at any quarterly or special called business meeting.

SECTION 4.02 - DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the senior pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the church clerk shall serve as secretary of the corporation; the church treasurer bookkeeper shall serve as treasurer bookkeeper shall serve as treasurer of the corporation; and the chairman of the deacons shall serve as vice-president of the corporation. The senior pastor, deacons selected pastors and deacons, and the treasurer bookkeeper shall constitute the officers of the corporation.

SECTION 4.03 - ELIGIBILITY FOR CHURCH OFFICERS

- A. The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of faith set forth in Article 2. All church officers, upon request of the pastors, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith.
- B. All church officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the pastors in order for them to commence or continue in their offices.
- C. Only church members are eligible for election or appointment to any church office or position. Affiliated co-laborers Temporary Members with this ministry are not eligible for such election or appointment.
- D. Upon termination of membership any officer of the church shall immediately forfeit his position and return any church property to the church office.

SECTION 4.04 - TERMS OF OFFICE

- A.** The relationship between the senior pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relationship between the senior pastor and the church may be considered at any regular or special called business meeting by following the procedures outlined in 6.02, provided notice of the meeting shall have been given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior to the meeting. A two-thirds majority of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to sever the relationship between the senior pastor and the church. Disciplinary removal of the senior pastor from office automatically terminates his membership. A restoration to membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements of Section 3.04.
- B.** The term of service for all offices and positions in the church, except the pastors, shall be one year, at the expiration of which the officers may be re-appointed.
- C.** A vacancy occurring in any office, except in the case of the senior pastor, may be filled at any regular church quarterly business meeting by a majority vote of present members.
- D.** All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed.
- E.** Members of the body of deacons may be removed from office for unbiblical conduct, as determine by the other deacons, upon a majority vote of the remaining members of the body of deacons.

SECTION 4.05 - CALLING A PASTOR

Upon the resignation, death, or dismissal of the senior pastor, the church shall seek a candidate who subscribes to the Statement of faith, the Covenant and bylaw provisions of this church, and whose life aligns with the qualifications of a pastor described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

- A.** Ideally, a candidate should be chosen by the senior pastor from within the current ministry personnel. The senior pastor will devise a plan of succession so that the purpose, philosophy, and unity of the ministry may be maintained. Upon an agreed time by the senior pastor and the candidate, the senior pastor will present the candidate to the church to be voted on.

- B.** If there is not a candidate within the ministry personnel that could possibly succeed the current senior pastor, the chairman of the deacons shall lead a Pastor Search Team that shall consist of current active deacons and three members of the church, two of which shall be women. The Pastor Search Team shall secure names and qualifications of potential candidates for the office of senior pastor.
- C.** After hearing the candidate preach and after the Pastor Search Team has lovingly questioned him thoroughly, they may call a special business meeting for the purpose of voting on the candidate in question according to the procedures set forth in Section 4.04.

Section 4.06 Pastoral Oversight of Officers and Church Staff

- A.** Subject to appropriate budgetary allowance, and on the condition that they shall become a member of the church upon assuming their duties, the senior pastor may hire associates and assistants to assist him in carrying out his God-given responsibilities.
- B.** All church staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall be under the supervision of the senior pastor who has the sole authority to hire as well as dismiss the same. No employee or volunteer shall be hired, appointed, or retained who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith.

ARTICLE 5

DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS

SECTION 5.01 - GENERAL DUTIES

A. Specific Powers. The church officers shall exercise the following specific powers:

1. To purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church;
2. To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church, to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and the use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges; and
3. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church, if such action is mandated by a vote of the church membership.

SECTION 5.02 - THE PASTOR

A. Qualifications

Pastors must be above reproach in their marriages, in their personal discipline and holiness, in their families and households, and in their community beyond the church. Pastors may not be recent converts.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 is the definitive list of qualifications for the office of pastor in Scripture. This list should be the standard for pastoral spiritual qualification. No more, no less.

B. Responsibilities

1. The pastors shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. The senior pastor shall oversee the administration of administer the ordinances of the church, act as moderator at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters, supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual

interests of the membership.

2. The senior pastor shall oversee the various ministry teams. He shall serve as the team leader of the Shepherding Ministry Team. He shall inform all newly elected and/or appointed officers of the particular function and the responsibilities of their respective offices. He shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and perform such other duties as generally appertain to such a position. The senior pastor shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry that God has given him.
3. All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof including time and place and the use of the property belonging to the church for purposes other than the stated appointments shall be under the control of the pastor oversight of the pastors.
4. The senior pastor may at his discretion, with the approval of the Shepherding Ministry Team, hire assistant pastors to assist him in carrying out the ministries of the church.

C. Removal of Office - The removal of the a pastor for apostasy (divergence from the doctrinal statement) or for immoral or unethical practices shall be made only after due examination by the other pastors and deacons according to the procedures set forth in Section 3.01 (E), Section 3.04 (A & B), and Section 4.04 (A).

D. Resignation – In the event the senior pastor should resign, the resignation will become effective when mutually agreed upon by the deacons and pastor, other pastors and the outgoing senior pastor.

SECTION 5.03 - DEACONS

A. Responsibilities

1. The deacons shall assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the church services, and in performing all other work of the church. The deacons are responsible for making preparations to observe church ordinances and shall consider applications for church membership and affiliated co-laborers. The deacons shall consider benevolence needs, disburse the benevolence fund in cooperation with the pastor, and assist the pastor in all other evangelistic efforts of the church. The deacons shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries. They shall provide the pulpit supply and choose a moderator for church meetings if the pastor is

unavailable or the office of pastor is vacant. Upon the death, resignation, or dismissal of the pastor, the deacons may appoint a Pastor Search Team.

2. Deacons shall serve the church by assisting the Pastors in areas of member care, division of labor according to necessary tasks, shock absorption, and problem solving as needs and issues arise.
3. According to 1 Tim. 3:8-13, Deacons should be: 1) Worthy of respect, 2) Not double-tongued, 3) Not addicted to much wine, 4) Not greedy for dishonest gain, 5) Must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, 6) be tested and proven, and 7) have a faithful family life.
4. Deacons are expected to participate in the monthly deacons meeting, to regularly care for those allotted to their flocks as needed, to oversee any special areas of ministry specifically assigned to, and agreed upon by the deacon, and to assist the pastors as needed.
5. Following the last quarterly business meeting of the calendar year, the deacons shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a chairman of the deacons.
6. Deacons may select officers of their own body.
7. The pastors, the deacons, and the treasurer bookkeeper shall constitute the officers of the corporation. In addition to the various powers specifically granted the deacons under these bylaws, the deacons have authority to exercise the following powers, upon authorization by a majority vote of the eligible members at a duly called business meeting:
 - a. To purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church.
 - b. To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church; to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges.
 - c. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation.

d. To maintain the duties of loyalty to the church, confidentiality of church information, and fiduciary care regarding church finances, and a spiritual duty to pray for and support the church with their time, talents, and treasures.

8. All powers of the officers shall be compatible with the laws of the state of Florida.

9. The deacons shall, in conjunction with the pastors, conduct an annual ministry liability and safety review of the following policies and/or topics: child protection, including but not limited to worker screening procedures, child abuse reporting procedures, and worker training on child abuse prevention; building safety; security measures; insurance; financial accountability; transportation; sexual harassment; policies listed in IRS Form 990, including a whistleblower policy, a document retention and destruction policy, and a church financial investment policy (if applicable).

10. Each deacon shall review the bylaws annually and shall bring suggested changes to a meeting of the deacons that has been designated for the purpose of reviewing the bylaws.

B. Term of Office – The term of office of a deacon shall be a permanent one. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the church may or may not elect a deacon to fill his vacancy.

a. There shall be no obligation to elect as a deacon any brother who comes from another church in which he has previously served as a deacon.

b. A deacon may move to **inactive status**, thereby relinquishing his responsibilities and office as deacon. Reinstatement of an inactive deacon is conditional upon a majority vote of the congregation.

C. Meetings – The deacons shall meet regularly (usually once a month). At this meeting, reports, recommendations, upcoming events, and any new matters will be discussed with the pastor so that proper action can be taken so the general welfare of the church may be preserved.

These meetings will focus on personal growth and discipleship, member care, prayer, and the specific needs of the church.

D. Resignation/Removal – In the event that any deacon should resign, the resignation shall take effect as submitted with a written acknowledgement by the senior pastor. Any deacon may resign his position at any time by giving written notice of his resignation to a pastor or chairman of the deacons if the office of the senior pastor is vacant. The removal of a deacon for neglecting his duties and responsibilities or apostasy (divergence from the doctrinal statement) or for immoral or unethical practices shall be made only after due examination by the deacons and according to the procedures set forth in Section 3.04.

SECTION 5.04 - CHURCH CLERK

A. Responsibilities

1. Certify and keep at the office of the church the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws; minutes of meetings; the membership roll, baptisms, and records of any special events which are of historical interest to the church; and shall deliver such documents to his or her successor upon leaving office.
2. Maintain and file minutes of all church business and SMT meetings, including the time and place of holding, the notice given, the names of those present unless a church-wide meeting, and an accurate record of all church business approved at each meeting. A copy of these minutes shall be kept as a permanent record of the church and shall be made available at all reasonable times to proper person on terms provided by law and pursuant to these bylaws.
3. Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law; and see that reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.
4. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. In case of the absence or disability of the secretary, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the senior pastor or by the

chairman of the deacons.

5. Serve as the secretary of the corporation and be a member in good standing.

B. Term of Office – The term of office for the church clerk shall be a yearly appointed one. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the **senior** pastor may appoint a member in good standing.

SECTION 5.05 – TREASURER BOOKKEEPER

A. Responsibilities

1. Count, or cause to be counted, along with the **financial team** or deacons, and record in a permanent record all monies received as church offerings. This shall be done following each church service or day of services.
2. Convey in a timely manner all funds received to the person designated by the deacons for verification and deposit in the bank, including moneys received from outside sources.
3. Along with the church secretary, maintain a permanent weekly record of individual giving for all donations, offerings, contributions and gifts, and guard the confidentiality of these records. Issue an official receipt to each contributor at the end of the fiscal year.
4. Keep in the church office **Maintain accountability with access to** an accurate and permanent record of all financial transactions of church funds; make reports of itemized disbursements and the financial condition of the church as requested by the pastors and the deacons, and for annual, quarterly or otherwise special or regular business meetings; and deliver such records to his or her successor upon leaving office.
5. Serve as treasurer of the corporation and be a member in good standing.

B. Term of Office – The term of office for the treasurer **bookkeeper** shall be a yearly appointed one. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the **senior** pastor may appoint a member in good standing.

SECTION 5.06 - DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS

- A.** All records are the property of the church and must be kept in the church office access must be provided for the purpose of accountability.
- B.** Any officer who neglects his duties as outlined in the by-laws for a period of three months may be removed from his office at the discretion of the Shepherding Ministry Team and another may be appointed by them to serve the unexpired term.

ARTICLE 6

ORDINATIONS

SECTION 6.01 - ORDINATION QUALIFICATIONS

Any male member of this church or its mission churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, may be licensed and later ordained as a minister of the Gospel. A certificate of ordination enables him to perform the nine (9) sacerdotal functions such as conducting worship services, preaching/teaching, baptisms, weddings, funerals, baby dedications, giving spiritual guidance, and administrate church affairs as an ordained minister of the Gospel.

SECTION 6.02 - ORDINATION PROCEDURE

- A. Examination.** Upon a conference with the deacons and pastors, a meeting shall be called to examine the candidate's moral character and doctrinal beliefs. The ordination council shall consist of the church's deacons, and ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate.
- B. Recommendation.** If the candidate is found qualified by the ordination council they shall recommend to the church that they proceed with the ordination.
- C. Ordination Service.** The pastors shall arrange for the ordination service.

Article 7

Meetings

SECTION 7.01 - MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Unless otherwise determined by the pastors, the church shall meet each Sunday for public worship and at least once during the week for Bible study and prayer.

SECTION 7.02 - BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A. Time.** The regular church business meeting shall be held quarterly on the first Wednesday after the first Sunday of April, July, October, and January, unless announced otherwise, at which time the regular church business and recommendations of the Shepherding Ministry Team shall be considered. A quorum shall consist of the members present.
- B. Order.** All church business meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer for divine guidance and blessing. The following order shall be observed at regular quarterly business meetings.
1. Prayer
 2. Reading of minutes by members
 3. Corrections and/or additions noted
 4. Reports submitted
 5. Recommendations/New Matters
 6. Adjournment
 7. Benediction
- C. Moderator.** The senior pastor shall act as moderator at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters. The moderator shall determine the rules and procedures according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure and his decision is final and controlling. If the church is without a pastor, the chairman of the deacons shall serve as moderator.
- D. Voting.** Voting may be cast orally, by show of hands or secret ballot. The moderator will govern the method used. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting unless otherwise provided by the Constitution and Bylaws and any amendments thereto.

SECTION 7.03 - SPECIAL MEETINGS

- A. The senior pastor (or other pastors or deacons if the office of senior pastor is vacant or the senior pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action) may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a senior pastor or the severance of the relationship between the church and a pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of Sections 4.04(A) and 4.05.
- B. Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and revivals may be held as the pastors deems beneficial.

SECTION 7.04 - MOTIONS

Members who desire that a certain motion be made or subject matter be discussed during an quarterly or special business meeting must file a written recommendation with the pastor and deacons two weeks prior to the set meeting, who will then consider the proposal and proceed according to their conscience and what they understand to be in the best interests of the church. All other motions will be presented by the pastor and/or chairman of the deacons unless the pastor and/or the deacons have delegated authority to another member and/or officer to raise certain motions. No motions will be made from the floor.

New items of business during a quarterly or special business meeting must be submitted by a written recommendation to the senior pastor as moderator at least one week prior to the set meeting. The senior pastor will then consider the proposal among the leadership and proceed according to their conscience and what they understand to be in the best interests of the church.

All matters of business will be presented by or under the oversight of the senior pastor.

No new matters of business will be considered from the floor.

SECTION 7.05 - EXTRA BUDGETED ITEMS

The treasurer bookkeeper may, in the ordinary course of his duties, make or authorize the making of any expenditure or obligation in any amount not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1000). The pastors and deacons may make or authorize the making of any expenditure or obligation in any amount not exceeding three thousand dollars (\$3000). The membership may make or authorize the making of any expenditure or obligation in any amount whatsoever.

SECTION 7.06 - EMERGENCY EXPENDITURES

The pastors, treasurer **bookkeeper**, and the deacons may, in any emergency situation, make or approve the making of any expenditures or obligation exceeding the limit imposed on them in Section 7.05 under the following conditions:

- A. The pastors, bookkeeper, or the deacons, by a majority vote, must determine that the matter is of such urgency that it cannot wait until the next regular meeting of the membership or until a special meeting can be held. **Following their decision, the membership will be briefed at the earliest convenient time.**
- B. Before making any decision, the pastors, treasurer **bookkeeper**, and the deacons shall make a good faith effort to obtain the opinions of as many of the members as can be reached. The actual decision shall then be taken at a meeting of the pastor and the deacons, any action requiring the approval of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the deacons.

SECTION 7.07 - FISCAL YEAR.

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

Article 8

Educational Ministries

SECTION 8.01 - PURPOSE

The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To help fulfill this responsibility of imparting biblical truth and furthering the Great Commission, this church shall establish and maintain an educational program including a Sunday School and West Meadows Baptist Academy for the purposes of winning souls to Christ and teaching Bible doctrine, godly worship, and biblical Christian living. To this end, the church shall engage in educational ministries.

SECTION 8.02 - CHURCH PARTICIPATION

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the **senior** pastor and the Academy administrator, on behalf of the church, may permit non-church members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction.

SECTION 8.03 - AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT OF FAITH

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church and shall be taught and presented in full agreement with the statement of faith of the church and the inerrant Word of God. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or who expresses disagreement with the statement of faith or who adopts or lives a lifestyle inconsistent with the beliefs and practices of the statement of the faith, whether in or out of the classroom.

SECTION 8.04 - ACADEMY STAFF

All Academy faculty and staff must be born again believers and agree without reservation to the Statement of Faith. They must also be active members of West Meadows Baptist Church or will become a member upon employment or granted an exemption due to being an active member of a like-minded church. All faculty and staff must subscribe in writing the youth and child care policies of the church. This provision shall not apply to independent contractors such as janitors, contractors, visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or other special meetings on a temporary basis.

SECTION 8.05 - ACADEMY STRUCTURE OF AUTHORITY

- A.** The Academy Ministry Team leader (who is the Academy administrator) shall oversee all matters relating to the Academy ministry. He/she shall have the authority to approve or disapprove any decision or recommendation pertaining to the ministry of the Academy.
- B.** The Academy Ministry Team leader (Academy administrator) shall assist and advise the pastors on all matters relating to the Academy. The Shepherding Ministry Team shall hear all matters and disputes, which may arise out of the Academy ministry and shall advise the Academy Ministry Team leader and the pastors accordingly. The Academy administrator shall also advise the Finance Team and the pastor(s) monthly concerning Academy expenditures and financial matters.

SECTION 8.06 - YOUTH/CHILDCARE POLICIES

- A.** Why is youth and child training required?

The Bible commands us not to let our good be evil spoken of (Romans 14:16). We are also commanded to do all things “decently and in order” (I Corinthians 14:14) and to “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16). In order to help prevent allegations of child abuse, we screen workers, adopt policies and procedures for the protection of the children and staff, and keep good records. “Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” (Ephesians 6:10). Remember that your labor for the Lord is not in vain (I Corinthians 15:58).

- B.** Who is required to take youth and childcare training?

All children and youth ministry workers of the church, whether paid or volunteer, must take and update their training annually. Each worker must go through the childcare training and sign that they will follow these procedures before they can work with children and/or youth ministries. It is the policy of the church that no one who has been convicted of child abuse in any form be allowed to work with children or youth in any capacity.

C. What are the requirements and policies and procedures included in the childcare training?

1. Requirements for all youth and childcare workers of the Church.

- a. Salvation** – each worker must have personally accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their life.
- b. Submissive** – each worker must be submissive to Biblical authority in all areas of their lives.
- c. Sanctified** – each worker must set themselves apart by continually implementing Biblical principles in their lives in matters of:
 - i. Honesty – in dealings with all people.
 - ii. Moral purity – refrain from fornication, adultery, and homosexuality, as well as practices contributing to these such as pornography, vulgarity, and profanity.
 - iii. Self-control – demonstrates Christlike self-control in matters of conduct, attitude, and actions. This includes refraining from possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, and/or illegal drugs.
 - iv. Dependability – faithful to perform required tasks which may be assigned.
 - v. Forgiveness – willing to forgive others who may have wronged you.
- d. Submitted** – completed form CC1 Questionnaire for youth and children's workers of the Church.

2. Policies and Procedures (Operational Rules)

- a.** We believe God created men and women in His image as two distinct but equal genders which He intends to use for His glory (Genesis 1:26-27); furthermore, individual gender is assigned by God and determined at conception (Psalm 139:13-16); therefore, we believe that to intentionally alter or change one's physical gender by surgery and/or appearance or to live as a gender other than the one assigned at conception is to reject God's right as a Creator as well as His plan to glorify Himself through the gender He assigned that individual (I Corinthians 10:31).
- b.** You are not to act as the child's friend in a children's friendship manner. You must always appropriately maintain your proper respect and authority status and act accordingly. This does not mean that you cannot be friendly, but it does mean that you must act at all times with respect and dignity which is befitting to your position of ministry. Regarding dress, workers are asked to

dress in a modest and appropriate fashion. Ladies should refrain from wearing short, low-cut, or tight-fitting clothing that would draw attention to their bodies. Men should also dress modestly as to exemplify Christ.

- c. Male workers should endeavor to never embrace or caress a child. Always remember that an adult touching a child not his own could be viewed suspiciously.
- d. Female workers should avoid unnecessary contact with children.
- e. No worker should be alone with a child or lead a child to a private place. Always have at least two (2) adults present.
- f. Older children should not be permitted to sit on a worker's lap for extended periods. While this may often be necessary with very small children, we must act with discretion. The buddy system is mandatory.
- g. As a general policy, children should not be hugged or kissed by male church workers.
- h. No workers should ever invite a child to stay overnight alone at his or her home unless the child is a close personal friend of the worker's child.
- i. Church nursery workers who deal with babies still in diapers must be ladies and must use rubber gloves when changing diapers. There should always be a cloth or wipe between you and the child. Only lady workers may take nursery age children to the restroom. We recommend that the restroom door be left open so the nursery worker can maintain a posture that would safeguard against any accusations.
- j. Do everything you can to keep parents informed about their child's activities.
- k. All church outings and activities must be approved by a member of the pastoral staff as well as transportation to and from those activities. Each participant who is minor must provide permission slip that is to be signed by parents or legal guardians.
- l. Transportation for church related activities is done by authorized church personnel only. If and when multiple vehicles are used, they are to stay together as a group, following the directions of the church's authorized coordinator. If you ask another adult to drive other than authorized church

personnel, you make yourself personally liable as well as the church. The trip coordinator shall keep an accurate list of all those on the trip and periodically have the adult assistants ensure all children and youth are accounted for. Special care should be taken when leaving parks, restaurants, etc.

- m. Youth and childcare workers are to exercise prudence by making sure no child is locked in the building and/or vehicle after any planned church activities.
- n. The Church does not tolerate assault, threats, harassment, or abuse against church and/or school personnel or students. Verbal or written threats, racial/ethno cultural harassment, physical and/or sexual harassment, or abuse perpetrated by anyone in the church or school, whether intentional or unintentional, is condemned as unacceptable. The Church supports efforts designed to protect the welfare of staff and students. In dealing with matters of alleged assault, threats, harassment, or abuse, the dignity and rights of all are preserved and respected. The Church is characterized by a safe and harmonious working environment in which the needs and well-being of every individual is paramount.

Violent behavior shall not be tolerated and will be dealt with accordingly:

i. Children under the age of twelve:

Where children under the age of 12 are behaving in a violent manner, the staff member shall take the appropriate disciplinary action. The parents of the child must be involved in any action plan for remediation. The decision to report to the police will be made by the senior pastor. Police may take reports of incidents of violent behavior committed by persons of this age group. The staff members are to immediately report to the pastoral staff and the police incidents involving sexual assault, serious injury, and serious damage and/or violent behavior.

ii. Children twelve or older

For young people ages 12-17, any violent incident that may be considered criminal shall be reported to the police at the discretion of the senior pastor. Students who are 18 years of age or over are considered adults and the procedures of the state Criminal Code will be followed if these persons are charged and/or tried for criminal activities.

Any violent behavior, whether or not it is reported to the police, is to be reported to the senior pastor and recorded by the staff member on an Incident Report Form containing a description of the violent incident, a

reference to the call to the police and, if applicable, reference to any disciplinary response. This information together with any letters to the student and/or parent/guardian will be filed in the church office.

- o.** Any child or youth worker with the firsthand knowledge of child abuse or reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or is being abused has a state-mandated duty to report the abuse to state officials. The child or youth worker must immediately report the suspected abuse to the senior pastor (or principal – if school related) so together they can file a joint report concerning the matter with the state officials as required under Florida law. If the child or youth worker and senior pastor (or principal – if school related) do not report the incident together, they should notify each other in writing within 24 hours after making the report that the report has been made.

Florida Child Abuse Hotline – 1-800-962-2873

National Child Abuse Hotline – 1-800-422-4453

Department of Children and Family Services – 1-850-300-4342

- p.** Records must be turned into the church office so they may be kept on file of each of the following:
 - i.** All matters of significant conduct
 - ii.** All major incidents or injuries
 - iii.** All matters of discipline
 - iv.** Attendance (count the children)

These records must be accurate and include the names of each child, each adult worker, and the date of the class activity. It is the policy of the Church to have mandatory accident reviews within 30 days.

- q.** Corporal discipline is never allowed. This includes spanking, or striking the hands or fingers of a child.
- r.** All paid workers must have a level 2 criminal background check.
- s.** Volunteer workers for youth or children's ministries must be known by the church for a period of at least six months before being allowed to volunteer.
- t.** Children and youth workers are not to go into a child/youth's home during visitations while parents are not home.

- u.** All counseling is to be done according to the official counseling policies of the Church. Failure to do so could result in personal liability
- v.** If an accusation of improper behavior is made against you as a worker, in order to neutralize the situation, you will be placed on administrative leave until the matter is resolved. A member of the pastoral staff will then obtain names and statements of all those involved and any witnesses. Written statements signed by witnesses will be notarized in order to clear the matter up as quickly as possible. Upon the accusations being resolved favorably, you will be reinstated. If the allegations are proven to be true, discipline will be carried out by the church lovingly and fairly in order to avoid future problems.
- w.** The church has implemented “universal precautions” in an effort to minimize potential infectious diseases including blood-borne pathogens. We have developed an exposure control plan for all employees to ensure their protection as well as the children and youth to whom they ministry who may need minor medical attention for cuts, scrapes, etc.
- x.** To abide by Florida law, young people who work as helpers in nursery under adult supervision cannot work more than 3 hours on a school day and no more than 8 hours on a non-school day. If a young person works more than 4 consecutive hours, they must have a 30-minute break.
- y.** All youth and childcare workers are to take prudent measures to avoid being alone with any teenager or child of the opposite sex. This includes giving rides to and from activities if do so at the direction of the ministry.

ARTICLE 9

MINISTRY TEAMS

SECTION 9.01 - PURPOSE

According to Scripture (Ephesians 4:11) one of the responsibilities of pastors is to equip saints for the work of the ministry. The church accomplishes this command by empowering members to be part of ministry teams. Ministry teams equip members by providing training and empower members by helping them discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual gifts and talents for the Lord's work in the church.

SECTION 9.02 - THE SHEPHERDING MINISTRY TEAM

The Shepherding Ministry Team consists of the senior pastor, who shall be the team leader, all pastors and deacons, the church clerk, the church treasurer bookkeeper and all additional team leaders. The Shepherding Ministry Team may create and dissolve teams as ministry needs change.

A. General Duties

The Shepherding Ministry Team shall oversee the other ministry teams to ensure the welfare of the church, effectiveness of specific ministry areas, and be accountable for the resources God has entrusted to the church.

B. Specific Duties

1. Exemplify Christian character and conduct for the other members by Christlike attitudes and actions.
2. Provide counsel and assistance to the pastors in the various ministries of the church.
3. Research, formulate and recommend proposals to the church membership at regular and/or special called business meetings.
4. Formulate, adopt, and amend policies and procedures which affect the various aspects of the total church ministry
5. Meet monthly quarterly and report concerning assigned areas of responsibility/ministry.
6. Approve and/or recommend expenditures as needed to the church as authorized under Section 7.05.

SECTION 9.03 - TEAM STRUCTURE

All ministry teams are led by a team leader who encourages, equips, and motivates his team captains and team members to achieve excellence in their particular ministry area. Members may serve on as many as five teams each year by voluntarily committing themselves at the annual commitment Sunday (or shortly after becoming a member). The commitment is a simple one-year commitment after which time members may change ministry teams or recommit to the same ministry team. Team captains help assist the team leader in recording successes as well as maintaining accountability so that every team represents the Lord to the best of their ability in each specific ministry area.

SECTION 9.04 - SPECIAL TEAMS

The Shepherding Ministry Team, may create special teams to provide advice and information regarding matters submitted to it for consideration. The special team shall have no authority to act on behalf of the church. The members of the special team shall be chosen by a majority vote of the Shepherding Ministry Team for a specific time and purpose. The special team shall be subject to the control and direction of the Shepherding Ministry Team at all times.

ARTICLE 10

INDEMNIFICATION

SECTION 10.01 - ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

- A.** The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful.
- B.** The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

SECTION 10.02 - EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

To the extent that a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

SECTION 10.03 - LIMITATIONS OF INDEMNIFICATION

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the pastors, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Article 5. The determination shall be made (a) by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the pastors and deacons who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable or if the majority vote of a quorum of disinterested deacons so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

SECTION 10.04 - TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the deacons in the specific case, so long as the pastors, deacon, officer, employee, or agent agrees to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

SECTION 10.05 - EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

SECTION 10.06 - INSURANCE

The church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provision of the Article.

ARTICLE 11

BINDING CHRISTIAN ARBITRATION

SECTION 11.01 - SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION

Members of the church must agree to submit to binding Christian arbitration any legal matters within the church that cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bring any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

SECTION 11.02 - ARBITRATION PROCEDURES

The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the deacons. This arbitration provision is ecclesiastical and faith-based in nature and is intended to operate under the rules and guidelines of this local church. It is not intended to operate under any state or federal guidelines for arbitration.

ARTICLE 12

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

SECTION 12.01 - PURPOSE

The purpose of this conflict-of-interest policy is to protect the church's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer of the church or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state or federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

SECTION 12.02 - DEFINITIONS

- A. Interested Person:** Any officer, or member of a team with governing delegated powers who has a direct or indirect financial interest.
- B. Financial interest:** A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
 - 1.** An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement;
 - 2.** A compensation arrangement with the church or with any individual or entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement; or
 - 3.** A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the church is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
 - 4.** A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the deacons decide that a conflict of interest exists.
- C. Compensation:** Direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.
- D. Deacons:** The deacons of the church. The pastors and deacons will determine procedures for determining a possible conflict of interest.

SECTION 12.03 PROCEDURES

- A. Duty to Disclose.** In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the deacons and, if applicable, members of teams with governing delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- B. Determining whether a Conflict of Interest Exists.** After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, including any presentations by and discussion with the interested person, he or she shall leave the meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest involving the transaction or arrangement is discussed and voted upon. The remaining members (as applicable) shall decide, by a majority vote, if a conflict of interest exists.
- C. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest**
 - 1.** The chairman of the deacons shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or team to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 - 2.** After exercising due diligence, the deacons or team shall determine whether the church can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
 - 3.** If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, it shall be determined by a majority vote of the deacons whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interests of the church, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
- D. Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy**
 - 1.** If the deacons have reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
 - 2.** If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the deacons determine the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

E. Records of Proceedings

- 1.** The minutes of the meeting shall contain the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the deacons' decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- 2.** The minutes of the meeting also shall contain the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

F. Compensation

- 1.** A voting member of the deacons or any team member who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church for services rendered may not vote on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- 2.** A voting member of the deacons or any team member whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church, either individually or collectively, are not prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

G. Annual Statements: Each officer, and member of a team with delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy; has read and understands the policy; has agreed to comply with the policy; and understands the organization is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption, it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

H. Periodic Reviews: To ensure the organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- 1.** Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's-length bargaining.
- 2.** Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the church's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes, and do not result in inurement, impermissible private

benefit, or an excess benefit transaction.

- I. Use of Outside Experts: When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for above, the organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the deacons of their responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

ARTICLE 13

TAX-EXEMPTION PROVISIONS

SECTION 13.01 - PRIVATE INUREMENT

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article I hereof.

SECTION 13.02 - POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. To the extent prohibited by law, the church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

SECTION 13.03 - DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of the church, the pastors and deacons shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as the pastors and deacons shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax-exempt organizations that agree with the church's statement of faith.

SECTION 13.04 - NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The church shall not discriminate against members, applicants for membership, students, or others on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin; however, as a religious institution it reserves the right to deny or terminate employment or to deny or terminate any other status of persons whose lifestyle, words, actions or otherwise do not align with the church's statement of faith, standard of conduct or other policies of the church. This policy statement is not intended to waive the ministerial exception or any other exception or exemption to federal, state, or local antidiscrimination laws or regulations.

SECTION 13.05 - LIMITATION OF ACTIVITIES

Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Article I.

ARTICLE 14

AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the eligible members present and voting at any regular quarterly business meeting, provided that said revision or amendment is announced from the pulpit for at least two consecutive Sundays before the vote is taken. Proposed amendments or changes must be made available to voting members for review at least one week prior to the meeting at which the vote to amend the bylaws will be taken. Amendments become effective immediately upon a majority vote approving same.

These bylaws were adopted by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the church in which a quorum was present.

These bylaws supersede any other bylaws of West Meadows Baptist Church.

Date

Church Secretary