

CONSTITUTION OF BEECHWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

LOUISVILLE, KY

Adopted on April 9, 2023.

Preamble

We, the members of Beechwood Baptist Church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and recognizing the need to reconstitute ourselves to more closely conform to God's will for the Church, do hereby organize ourselves in accord with the Kentucky Nonprofit Corporation Act and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this church.

Article 1 – Statement of Faith

We affirm the *Baptist Faith and Message*, as revised in 2000. Furthermore, because “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16), we affirm the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.

Article 2 – Church Covenant

By God's grace, we are gathered as those who have repented and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have given ourselves to him and affirmed one another as citizens of his kingdom through baptism and the Lord's Supper. Relying on his gracious aid, we do now solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other. We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. We will walk together in love as Christ commands, caring for each other, watching over each other, and encouraging and admonishing one another as occasion requires. We will regularly attend the church's gatherings and faithfully pray for one another. We will endeavor to lead those in our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as well as to seek the salvation of our family and friends. We will rejoice at each other's happiness and bear each other's burdens and sorrows. With God's help, we will live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly desires. Our symbolic burial and resurrection in baptism testifies to this special obligation to live a new and holy life. We will work together to maintain a faithful gospel witness in our worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully to the expenses of the church, the needs of our neighbors, and the spread of the gospel around the world. If we leave this congregation, we will join another gospel-preaching church as soon as possible where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Article 3 – Membership

Section 1 - Qualifications

Members of this church shall be believers in Jesus Christ: (1) who give evidence of regeneration; (2) who have been baptized as believers in obedience to Christ; (3) who hold without mental reservation the doctrines of our church as expressed in the Statement of Faith; and (4) who promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant..

Section 2 - Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by affirmation of the members present at any meeting of the members.

Section 3 - Duties and Privileges of Membership

Members shall be expected to participate actively in the life of the church by regularly attending its gatherings (both worship services and members' meetings); faithfully observing its ordinances, namely baptism and the Lord's Supper; and submitting to its discipline and instruction. Voting privileges are to be restricted in the following manner: (1) to full members, excluding watchcare members; (2) to members over the age of sixteen years old; and (3) to members in good standing, as evidenced by faithful maintenance of the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant, regular attendance, financial stewardship, and prayerful support of the church and its ministries. Members shall publicly reaffirm these commitments on at least an annual basis. Non-members shall not lead any ministry, hold any office, or vote in any matter.

Section 4 - Watchcare Membership

Students and others temporarily residing in the Louisville area who are members of a church of like faith and practice may apply for watchcare membership. Qualifications for and process of membership are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. Duties and privileges of watchcare members are the same as for other members except that: (1) when absent from the Louisville area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services; and (2) while they are encouraged to participate in members' meetings, they are not eligible to vote.

Section 5 - Termination and Church Discipline

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and may do so following his or her voluntary resignation or joining with another church. The church shall have authority to exercise discipline over its members, which may involve excluding from its membership any member consistently neglectful of the duties enumerated in this constitution, or guilty of scandalous conduct by which the reputation of Christ or His church is dishonored. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 and those of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 and 2 Corinthians 2:6-8. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other reason the church deems necessary or prudent. A member shall be removed from membership as a matter of church discipline upon the recommendation of the elders and the subsequent agreement of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting on the question at any members' meeting.

Article 4 – Meetings

Section 1 - Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2 - Members' Meetings

There shall be members' meetings as necessary, at some time apart from the Sunday morning service. The elders shall call these meetings. A written request, submitted to the elders, of a majority of the church membership shall also prompt such a meeting. Ordinarily, a members' meeting will be called with at least two-weeks' notice. The date, time, and purpose of any such meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within the two weeks preceding the meeting. In situations where the elders call a members' meeting with fewer than two-weeks' notice, other means of communication may be utilized. A quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. An elder shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. Meetings shall proceed according to a reasonable order. On any matter that is brought to vote, a simple majority of all votes cast is needed for it to pass (unless this constitution specifies otherwise). Abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. Members must be physically present in order to vote.

Article 5 – Officers

Section 1 - Summary

The biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons, but final earthly authority is vested in the assembled congregation.. The biblical terms “elder,” “pastor,” and “overseer” are understood to refer to the same biblical office. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer, as well as paid ministerial staff as occasion may require. All officers must be members of this church, in good standing, prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 2 - Elders

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall provide broad oversight to the ministry, financial management, and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; James 5:14; and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall seek the mind of Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as they undertake the work of shepherding God's flock. The elders shall teach and exhort; refute those who contradict the truth; pray for the sick; care for the church's members; devote themselves to prayer, to the government of the church, and to ministry. The elders shall provide oversight of the congregation and lead the church to fulfill its ministries.

The elders shall be comprised of not less than three men, assuming men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 can be found. Only men may serve as elders in accord with 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:2. The elders shall regularly reevaluate the ministerial needs of the congregation and present such men for the office of elder that meet the biblical qualifications and display such spiritual gifting as needed to fulfill those needs. Such men shall be recommended to the congregation for a vote of affirmation during a members' meeting. Only those who receive an affirmative vote of two-thirds or more shall enter the office.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, only afterwards to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew

18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any elder may be dismissed by a two-thirds majority vote at any formally called members' meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to oversee worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage and teach sound doctrine, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, mobilize the church for world missions, examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, and oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions. The elders may establish and oversee ministry positions and committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders shall also have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. The outworking of this responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to deacons or another staff member. Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, the treasurer, and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized annual budget.

The elders shall elect a chairman of the elder body. In compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of Kentucky, the elder body shall serve as the board of directors of the corporation, and the chairman of the elder body shall serve as the president of the corporation. In the event that the church has no elders, the church will elect an interim moderator and seek to elect elders as soon as possible.

Section 3 - Deacons

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 (cf. Acts 6:1-7). The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, who possess gifts of ministry, and who are called to further service and care for the church's members. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and the call and qualifications of men in the church. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. A deacon's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal.

Deacons shall advise and assist the elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the church, and the care of the members of the congregation. The deacons may be organized in the most fitting way to accomplish the mission of the church. Thus, the ministry of deacons may involve several diaconal committees. There is no requirement that the deacons meet as a committee of the whole. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, deacons shall not exercise a ministry of spiritual authority, but work to maintain the unity of the church, and care for the physical needs of the church.

Section 4 - Clerk

The church shall elect a church clerk on an annual basis. It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the elders, deacons, or the church. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the state of Kentucky, the clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation. The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution

shall be available for all church members. The clerk's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal.

Section 5 - Treasurer

The church shall elect a treasurer on an annual basis. No individual may serve as treasurer for more than three consecutive years. The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder or a paid church staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as designated by the church. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at members' meeting. The treasurer's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal.

Article 6 – Elections

Section 1 - Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles: (1) substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, shall be an integral part of the election process; (2) nominations shall proceed with the support of the elders; (3) all candidates for church office shall be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members; and (4) the election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 - Selection of Officers

Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, and treasurer shall be presented by the elders and made known to the church prior to voting. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. A two-thirds majority of all votes cast is required for the office of elder. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast.

Article 7 – Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The church shall purchase appropriate insurance to meet these potential liabilities. At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful. If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Article 8 – Dispute Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (cf. Matthew 18:15- 20 and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8), the church shall urge its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles and the avoidance of suits of law to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities. The elders shall adopt policies and procedures to effect these aspirations. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek fair compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company so long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. Any member who brings suit against the church as a body shall forfeit his/her membership immediately and will be considered out of fellowship with this body.

Article 9 – Amendments

This Constitution shall be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members voting on the question at any members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at any previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced at every public meeting of the church immediately prior to final consideration.

Article 10 – Dissolution

In the event that the elders of the church determine that there is reasonable cause to dissolve the church as a corporate entity, the elders shall recommend dissolution to the membership. The elders shall call a special members' meeting. Notice of such a meeting shall state that the purpose of the meeting is to consider dissolution of the corporation and how the assets of the corporation will be distributed after all creditors have been paid. At least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the proposal of dissolution. In the event that the church has no elders, the interim moderator will call such a meeting. After approval of dissolution by the members, all of the corporation's debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated, as approved by a simple majority of the members present at a members' meeting, to one or more religious organizations which meet the qualifications described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of exclusively for such exempt purposes by a court of competent jurisdiction where the principal office of the corporation is then located.