

# **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BIBLE CHURCH OF LITTLE ROCK**

## **ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE**

This assembly, known as The Bible Church of Little Rock, Little Rock, Arkansas, establishes this Constitution for the purpose of orderly church administration, to fulfill the call to make and mature disciples by the faithful proclamation of the gospel and the consistent teaching of the Word of God to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). Our Mission Statement is:

“The Bible Church of Little Rock exists to love and glorify God and to love the people He has created. We show that love through our commitment to Scripture and prayer; to providing an environment where people can know Jesus Christ, worship, grow, serve and be accountable to God and each other; and by reaching out into our community and world, offering hope in the name of our Savior and Lord.”

## **ARTICLE II: GOVERNMENT**

### **Section 1: Spiritual Leadership**

This church acknowledges only the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head; the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide in matters of faith, church order, and discipline; the Holy Spirit as its Teacher; and is neither accountable to nor under the jurisdiction or supervision of any other ecclesiastical body.

### **Section 2: Authority**

The government of this church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is vested in the body of believers who compose it, whose vote shall be final, as specified by this Constitution.

The desire of the membership of this church, as determined by its majority vote, as well as the provisions of this Constitution, shall be executed by the elected officers of the church. The provisions of Section I of this Article shall not be abridged by any vote of the membership.

## **ARTICLE III: ORGANIZATION AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

### **Section 1: Membership**

The membership of the church shall consist of those persons who confess their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible (Romans 10:9-10), subscribe to the

authority of the Bible in matters of faith, church order and discipline, and submit to the Doctrinal Statement and Constitution of the church. Children who acknowledge these tenets without coercion shall be accepted as members. The minimum voting age in all membership meetings shall be 21 years.

Every membership candidate shall meet with at least two members of the Board of Elders to confirm the testimony of the candidate regarding his faith in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Instruction shall be held at the discretion of the Elders. Acceptance for membership shall be by written recommendation of the two Elders for approval by the Board of Elders.

It is the duty of the membership to live godly lives, to pray for and support the Elders and Deacons, to use their spiritual gifts as responsible members of the body of Christ, to communicate to the leadership regarding issues which affect the church while submitting to the leadership of the Elders, to search out the Scripture to test the leadership for sound teachings (as did the Bereans, Acts 17:11), and to provide resources (finances, time, and talents) to support the church.

Any person shall be removed from church membership who violates the stated requirements for membership or who does not respond to the application of church discipline as prescribed in Matthew 18:15-20, with a final appeal made to the individual by the church at large, and with formal communication to the individual by the Board of Elders, after a reasonable time for the individual to repent.

## **Section 2: Officers**

Officers of the church shall consist of a Board of Elders, a Board of Deacons and a Board of Trustees. The Board of Elders shall consist of the compensated Elders (known as the Pastors) and at least eight noncompensated Elders elected from and by the church body. The number of noncompensated Elders shall exceed the number of compensated Elders by a minimum of three. In the event that the number of noncompensated Elders does not exceed the number of compensated Elders by a minimum of three for any reason, the Board of Elders shall notify the church membership, which will then be asked to submit names to the Board of Elders in consideration for the office of Elder. The Board of Elders shall interview the candidates and by at least 2/3 majority vote approve the candidates. A list of the approved candidates shall be communicated to the church membership not later than three weeks before a called meeting of the membership, or the Annual Membership Meeting. At the meeting, the election of all Elders shall be by secret ballot and by 2/3 vote. The church membership and the Board of Elders shall be given reasonable and necessary time, as determined by the Board of Elders, and not to exceed six months without an extension approved by 2/3 majority of the church membership, to identify, interview and approve candidates who are biblically qualified for the office of Elder. The Board of Deacons shall consist of at least 12 members elected from and by the church body. The Board of Trustees shall consist of at least three members elected from and by the church body. The number of members of the Boards of Elders and Deacons may be

increased or decreased at any time by 2/3 majority vote of the membership.

### **Subsection A.: Qualifications of Officers**

All officers of the church elected from the church membership shall be men who are members of the church in full fellowship for more than one year. All should be living to the best of their understanding an exemplary and prayerful Christian life, especially as regards loyal obedience to the moral precepts taught in the Word of God for believers. The moral and spiritual qualifications for those who assume places of leadership in the church are contained in the Scriptures, particularly in 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9 and Acts 6:3. Officers should be nominated and elected in the light of these God-given requirements.

### **Subsection B.: Duties of Officers**

#### **1. Board of Elders**

It shall be the duty of the Elders (compensated and noncompensated) to lead and care for the spiritual condition of the church, to guard the purity of doctrine and life of the church, and to supervise church discipline in accordance with the Word of God. Specifically, the Elders shall preach and teach the Word, administer the Lord's ordinances, act for the church in the reception and dismissal of members, examine all seeking membership into the church, counsel the needy, comfort the afflicted, visit the sick, invite outside speakers, and supervise the operation of the church with its various ministries in matters of faith, doctrinal content, discipline and prayer. The compensated Elders shall be known as Pastors. One of the compensated Elders shall be designated as the Pastor-Teacher, whose primary duties are to preach in the worship services, to perform the ordinances regularly, and lead the pastoral staff. The Elders shall designate the other Pastors to serve in specific areas of ministry (such as Administrative Pastor, Pastor of Worship, Pastor to Students, Pastor to Singles, Pastor to Children, etc.) or in any combination thereof as the need arises. In the event of a vacancy in any pastoral position, the Board of Elders shall designate another Elder to assume the duties of the vacated position as necessary.

The Board shall meet at least once a month in order to transact the business under its jurisdiction. The Chairman of the Board of Elders, a noncompensated Elder who has served at least one year on the Board, shall be elected by 2/3 majority vote of the Board for a term of one year at the first meeting of the Board after the Annual Membership Meeting of the church in December, by the newly-elected Board of Elders. The Vice-Chairman, an Elder who has served at least one year, shall be elected in a similar manner and will serve in leadership of the Board of Elders in the absence of the Chairman. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman may be re-elected in successive years. The Chairman shall conduct the Annual Membership Meeting, as well as the meetings of the Board of Elders, and he shall communicate with the church regularly about issues under consideration by the Board. The Chairman shall also appoint one of the noncompensated Elders as a Recording Secretary, who will keep minutes of all meetings and archive them at the

church, for review by all church members. All decisions of the Board of Elders shall be by 2/3 majority vote, with time allotted for prayer and Scripture study, seeking unanimity in cases of disagreement.

The noncompensated Elders shall hold closed session meetings to determine by 2/3 majority vote the following issues: (1) consideration of requests made by the Pastors for ministry assignments in addition to their normal church duties ( speaking engagements on behalf of other ministries, conferences, etc. and any leave of absence for the purpose of education and/or book authorship) and (2) annual job performance reviews of the Pastors, with constructive commentary supplied to the Pastors as a result of such reviews.

## **2. Board of Deacons**

It shall be the duty of the Board of Deacons to have the care of all matters pertaining to the physical properties and finances of the church. They shall decide who is authorized to sign vouchers regarding expenditures from church ministry accounts, and the number of signatures necessary for the authorization of bank checks. They shall also be responsible for such temporal duties as ushering at church services, provisions for widows and orphans, determination of salaries and the provision of every material thing for proper worship, subject to the oversight of the Board of Elders, by means of monthly reports to the Board of Elders of the activities and decisions of the Board of Deacons.

The Board shall meet at least once a month in order to transact the business under its jurisdiction. The Chairman of the Board of Deacons, a Deacon who has served at least one year, shall be elected by the Board in a 2/3 vote for a term of one year. The Vice-Chairman, a Deacon who has served at least one year, shall be elected in the same manner. The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman may be re-elected in successive years. The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Deacons and appoint one of the Deacons to be the Recording Secretary, who will keep minutes of all meetings and archive them at the church for review by all church members. The elections of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman shall be subsequent to the Annual Membership Meeting in December, by the newly-elected Deacon Board. All other decisions of the Board of Deacons shall be by simple majority vote.

## **3. Board of Trustees**

It shall be the duty of the Board of Trustees to hold the title to the church property and to hold the same subject to the uses and benefit of the church. They shall not purchase or dispose of real estate or fixed property without first having brought the matter before the Board of Deacons and a meeting of the membership. This being done, they shall be given authority to act as directed by the membership. All decisions of the Board of Trustees shall be by unanimous vote.

## **Subsection C.: Election of Officers**

### **1. Pastors**

Candidates for pastoral positions shall be sought by a Pastoral Search Committee, appointed by the Board of Elders, consisting of at least one noncompensated Elder, one Deacon and members of the church body, the number of which may vary from time to time at the discretion of the Chairman of the Board of Elders. The Pastoral Search Committee shall conduct solicitation to meet a specific pastoral need, and recommend by 2/3 majority vote the name of candidates to the Board of Elders for an initial interview. After questioning by the Board of Elders regarding any and all matters pertaining to the candidate's qualifications and unanimous vote approval by the Board of Elders, the candidate shall be invited for a visit with the church membership for introduction and questioning by them. After a period of at least one week, a meeting of the membership will be held to determine if the candidate will be called to the position, with 2/3 majority vote of the membership in attendance at the meeting required for acceptance. The election of all pastors shall be for an indefinite period of time.

### **2. Nominating and Election Process for Noncompensated Elders, Deacons and Trustees**

At their regular August meeting, the Board of Elders shall begin the process for the election of new officers for the church. The Board of Elders shall notify the membership that the process has begun. The church membership will then be asked to submit names to the Board of Elders in consideration for the upcoming vacancies in the offices of Elder, Deacon, and Trustee, no later than the first Sunday in October. The Board of Elders shall interview the candidates and by 2/3 majority vote approve the name of one man to be considered as the nominee for each existing vacancy on the Boards. A list of the candidates shall be communicated to the church membership not later than the second Sunday in November. At the Annual Membership Meeting, the election of all officers shall be by secret ballot, by 2/3 vote, for a given vacancy. If a given nominee fails to be approved by the church, the Board of Elders shall propose another nominee.

The noncompensated Elders and Deacons shall be elected for a period of three years on a rotating basis so that the terms of approximately one-third of the members of each Board shall expire each year. The term of office for each Trustee shall be for five years and there shall be no rotation of officers. Should the office of any Elder, Deacon or Trustee become vacant before the expiration of his term of office, his successor may be elected by the membership at a called meeting to fill the unexpired term according to the nomination process above.

## **Subsection D.: Resignation or Dismissal of an Elected Officer**

The resignation of an officer shall be in writing and presented to the Chairman of the Board of Elders. Final action shall be taken at the first meeting of the Board of Elders after notification.

If any Pastor proves himself to be unfaithful or unfit to scripturally fulfill the duties of his office, on the basis of the testimony of at least two witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19) and a hearing by the noncompensated Elders, he shall be discharged by 2/3 majority vote of the noncompensated Elders, with an appropriate explanation to the church by the Chairman of the Board of Elders. If any noncompensated Elder proves himself to be unfaithful or unfit to scripturally fulfill the duties of his office, on the basis of the testimony of at least two witnesses and a hearing by the other Elders, he shall be discharged by 2/3 majority vote of the other Elders, with an appropriate explanation made to the church by the Chairman of the Board of Elders. If any Deacon or Trustee proves himself to be unfaithful or unfit to scripturally fulfill the duties of his office, on the basis of the testimony of at least two witnesses and a hearing by the Board of Elders, he shall be discharged by 2/3 majority vote by the Board of Elders, with an appropriate explanation made to the church by the Chairman of the Board of Elders.

### **Section 3: Ministry Directors**

The leadership of certain ministries in the church may need to be filled by an individual who is not required to be a Pastor, and such a leader shall be designated as a director. All directors shall be hired after agreement regarding the specific ministry need, interview and approval by the Board of Elders and the affirmation of the church by 2/3 majority vote. All directors are subject to an annual job performance review by the Board of Elders. Any director may be removed for failure to perform the specific ministry duties originally outlined at the time of the establishment of the directorship, by 2/3 majority vote of the Board of Elders, or be removed according to Section I of this Article as applied to all of the church membership.

### **Section 4: Administrative and Support Staff**

The Administrative Staff of the church shall consist of a Church Administrator and Treasurer, both of whom are members of the church. The Church Administrator, who is selected by and reports to the Board of Deacons, shall be competent in business management and be empowered to sign checks and to disburse funds in the name of the church for its financial obligations and beneficences; this role may be assumed by a Pastor, if so qualified. The Treasurer shall be selected by the Board of Deacons and be responsible for accurate deposit of all church funds and the maintenance of financial records; this role shall not be assumed by a Pastor. The Treasurer's books shall be subject to audit each year under the authority of the Board of Deacons and open for inspection by any church member, upon request, with the Church Administrator. Secretaries, maintenance personnel, and any other ancillary staff needed to operate the church in an efficient manner shall be hired by the Church Administrator subject to the approval of the Board of Deacons.

## **ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

### **Section 1: Annual Meeting**

The fiscal year of the church shall end on the 31st day of December of each year. The Annual Membership Meeting shall be held the first Sunday of December to elect officers as provided in Article III, and transact other business.

### **Section 2: Quorum and Conduct**

No business shall be transacted at any membership meeting unless a quorum is present. A quorum shall consist of at least one-fourth of the voting membership. In all meetings, the Chairman of the Elders shall preside, and in his absence or at his request, he may appoint a substitute from the Board of Elders. In the transaction of business, Robert's Rules of Order shall be used in all cases not covered by this Constitution. Minutes shall be kept by the Recording Secretary of the Board of Elders and archived at the church for review by all church members.

### **Section 3: Voting**

Voting shall be by secret ballot, with a simple majority vote of the membership present at the meeting unless otherwise specified.

### **Section 4: Called Meetings**

A called meeting of the membership for the transaction of business may occur provided that an announcement of the meeting has been given upon a minimum of at least one prior public meeting and a written notice has been provided to the membership by mail in which the purpose of the meeting is stated. Such meetings may be called at any time by the Board of Elders, by the written request of any voting member after approval of the request by the Board of Elders, or in a petition signed by 10% of the members of the church who are eligible to vote, directed to the attention of the Chairman of the Board of Elders.

## **ARTICLE V: ORDINANCES**

### **Section 1: The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper shall be observed as often as the Board of Elders shall order, and it shall be open to all who know Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

### **Section 2: Baptism**

Baptism, at the request of each believer, shall be administered by immersion.

## **ARTICLE VI: ORDINATION**

The Board of Elders shall have the authority to ordain men to the ministry. Only those men who submit to the Doctrinal Statement of The Bible Church of Little Rock and of unquestionable character as specified by 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9 and Acts 6:3 shall be ordained.

## **ARTICLE VII: SCHOOL**

The church may, at its discretion, establish a school for the purpose of the education of children. The school may exist on an elementary and/or a secondary level.

The school shall be headed by an Administrator and his Assistant Administrators, as necessary, who shall be hired after interview and 2/3 majority vote by the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons and the membership of the church present at a called meeting of this purpose. The Administrator is to be hired for an indefinite period of time. The Administrator is subject to the financial oversight of the Board of Deacons and is accountable to the Board of Elders for the orderly administration of the school, the biblical content of the curriculum, and the doctrinal integrity of the teaching staff of the school. The Administrator shall establish a School Board for the purpose of the detailed oversight of the school and discussion of personnel matters. The School Board will be empowered to act upon such issues independently with the approval of the Administrator.

Members of the School Board will be subject to approval by the Board of Elders prior to their election for service. The Administrator may be removed from office for failure to perform the duties of orderly administration, inadequate oversight of the biblical content of the curriculum, or financial irresponsibility. Removal shall be enacted by 2/3 majority vote of the Board of Elders with an appropriate explanation made to the church by the Chairman of the Board of Elders.

Any school fulfilling this description may become independent from the church upon the demonstration of adequate financial resources and adequate spiritual oversight capabilities. This decision shall be established by 2/3 majority vote of the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons and the membership of the church present at a called meeting for this purpose. Such assumption of independence by any school does not preclude the prerogative of the church to establish another school at any future time.

## **ARTICLE VIII: TEACHERS**

All teachers shall submit themselves to the Constitution and the Doctrinal Statement.

## **ARTICLE IX: MISSIONARIES**

All missionaries supported through the church shall submit themselves to the official Missions Policy of the church and shall be approved by the Missions Committee, which shall consist of at least one noncompensated Elder, one Pastor, one Deacon and members of the church body (the number of which shall be determined by the Board of Elders and which may vary from time to time).

## **ARTICLE X: CHANGES OR AMENDMENTS**

Changes or amendments to this Constitution may be made at any meeting of the membership, provided such changes or amendments do not infringe in any way upon the Doctrinal Statement of the church, with such alterations approved by 2/3 vote of the membership in attendance.

*(Original adoption 1-7-52, with revisions 12-5-62, 11-19-95, 12-2-01, 12-5-04)*

### **ADMENDMENT I: TIME AND SERVICE OF NONCOMPENSATED ELDERS AND DEACONS; NUMBER OF NONCOMPENSATED ELDERS AND DEACONS**

The noncompensated Elders and Deacons shall be elected for a period of three years, on a rotating basis, so that the terms of approximately one-third of the members of each Board shall expire each year. Each Elder and Deacon who is faithfully serving in his role shall be eligible for renewal of his term upon the two-thirds majority vote of the church at the Annual Membership Meeting immediately prior to the expiration of his term. This provision allows for the continuation of the service of qualified Elders and Deacons to meet the ministry needs of the church. The number of noncompensated Elders and Deacons is flexible, and may be altered upon the two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Elders, in order to optimally meet the changing needs of the ministries of the church. This amendment abolishes the requirement of a one-year lapse between terms for Elders and Deacons as listed in Article III, Section 2, Subsection C, Subcategory 2, and the requirement of a church membership vote to increase the numbers of the Deacons and the Elders as listed in Article III, Section 2, but in no way alters the ability of the church to choose its leadership.

*Adopted October 26, 1997*

