

POPLAR SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH

CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Having been led of the Lord to maintain a testimony for Him at all times, we declare and adopt the following as our Constitution and Bylaws for the preservation of the articles of our faith, for guidance in an orderly manner, the business affairs of the church, for the continuance and increase of the ministry already begun by this Christian fellowship in the most effective and efficient means available.

I. NAME

This body shall be known as the Poplar Springs Baptist Church, Charles City Road, Richmond, Virginia.

II. ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. THE SCRIPTURES

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

2. GOD

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. GOD THE FATHER

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

B. GOD THE SON

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

C. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

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

3. MAN

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

4. SALVATION

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense, salvation included regeneration, sanctification, and glorification.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

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

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

5. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a glorious display God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

6. THE CHURCH

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation, members are equally responsible. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.

7. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

8. THE LORD'S DAY

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, and by refraining from worldly amusements, and resting from secular employment, work of necessity and mercy only being excepted.

9. THE KINGDOM

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

10. LAST THINGS

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

11. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

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

12. EDUCATION

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is coordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive, along with these, the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian schools is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

13. STEWARDSHIP

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

14. COOPERATION

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

15. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Christian should oppose, in the spirit of Christ, every form of greed, selfishness, in brotherly love. In order to promote these ends cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

16. PEACE AND WAR

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ, they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

17. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom, no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

(For Scriptural references relating to items 1-17, see *The Baptist Faith and Message* adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on May 9, 1963)

III. Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and, on a profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly enter into agreement with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the harmony and advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and fellowship; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, defend its ordinances, preserve its discipline, and make known its doctrines. We agree to contribute scripturally to the support of the ministry, both at home and in foreign lands, to the relief of the poor, and the maintenance of the institutions fostered by this church.

We, also, engage to maintain religious devotions both secretly and in our homes; to educate our children religiously, to seek the salvation of our children, other kindred, our friends and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be honest, fair, and just in our dealings and exemplary in our deportment.

We further engage to watch over one another in Christian love; to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech and conduct; to be slow, always, to take offense and ever ready to forgive and be reconciled; to be mindful of the rules of life taught by our Savior, both in avoiding discord and speedily securing agreement and restoration of harmony and Christian fellowship.

We, moreover, engage that we will continue in this church fellowship and membership until we remove to another place, and that then we will unite with some other New Testament church in which we can carry out the spirit and terms of this agreement according to the Word of God, in obedience to our Savior, under whose authority we live.

IV. CHARACTER

Section 1. Policy

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it, it is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognized and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as its practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Dover Baptist Association and Baptist General Association of Virginia affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Section 2. Doctrine

This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of other Southern Baptist Churches indicated in the foregoing articles of faith.

V. BYLAWS

Membership

Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates, after being properly screened by pastor, and/or deacons, shall be presented to the church at any regular worship service for membership in any of the following ways:

- (1) By profession of faith and for baptism by immersion in water
- (2) By promise of a letter from another church of like faith and practice
- (3) By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a church of like faith and practice when no letter is obtainable

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and the deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of those members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

Section 3. Termination of Active Membership

There are six ways active membership shall be terminated. Persons may be reinstated to active membership by contacting the church clerk, who will present their names to the church at the next business meeting.

Reasons for the termination are:

- (1) Death
- (2) Letter to another church
- (3) Erasure upon becoming affiliated with a church where no letter is requested
- (4) Should a member become an offense to the church and to its testimony by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his covenant vows, or nonsupport of the church, the church may terminate his membership by a three-fourths vote, but only after faithful efforts have been made to bring such a member to repentance and restoration and only after due notice has been given.
- (5) Members who have not attended a worship service within the last 12 months will be assigned to the Inactive Roll. Exceptions are made for those who are physically unable to attend, those who are in the military, college students, and missionaries. Members with inactive status will not be assigned a deacon or have voting privileges at business meetings. By church action, an inactive member may be dropped from the church roll, but only after faithful efforts have been made to bring such a member back into active fellowship with the church.
- (6) The Church Clerk will also maintain a list of non-resident members, persons residing 100 or more miles from the church. These persons will not be assigned a deacon or have voting privileges. The designation of non-resident member does not apply to military or college students.

Note of explanation: Once the inactive member policy and letter are approved by the church, the staff ministers, deacons, and clerk will determine the inactive status of a member. The deacons will distribute a tentative inactive list to members to assist in up-dating/correcting records with the clerk/deacons before a letter is sent to the inactive member. Persons who can't be contacted will be put on the Inactive Roll without being sent a letter. The pastor should sign the letter on church stationary.

VI. CHURCH OFFICERS AND STAFF

All church officers must be members of the church and elected annually unless otherwise provided. The officers of this church shall be as follows:

Section 1. Pastor

The pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organization, and the church staff in performing their tasks. A major concern of the pastor is to perform pastoral responsibilities. The pastor is the leader of worship, proclamation, education and pastoral ministry.

He shall mutually consult with the deacons and church council members to schedule special emphasis (revival) meetings of the church and jointly agree upon the guest minister who will conduct such meetings. He shall serve as ex-officio member of all committees.

CALLING A PASTOR

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall be given.

A Pastor Search Committee shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor. The Pastor Search Committee shall consist of seven (7) church members. This committee shall represent a broad cross-section of the church membership, to include at least (2) deacons, (one being a member of the Personnel Committee). The Pastor Search Committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one candidate at a time. Election shall be by ballot. Three-fourths of those present and voting constitutes an affirmative choice. The Pastor, thus elected shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.

DISCONTINUANCE/RESOLUTION

If at his request, the pastor shall give at least two weeks notice at the time of this resignation before discontinuing his responsibilities as pastor. If by church initiative, the following will apply:

At the request of no less than twelve (12) church members, a special investigative committee of ten (10) shall be appointed by the Nominating Committee and approved by the church. The special committee shall consist of two (2) deacons, (one being a member of the Personnel Committee), two (2) council members, and the remaining six (6) shall be named from the church membership to represent the different views of the church.

The committee thus formed, shall investigate and discuss the problems existing, and by majority rule either (1) recommend to the church in favor of discontinuance or opposed to discontinuance of the pastor, or if consensus is varied (2) petition the membership for resolution. The church members will vote in favor of or against the petition presented by the special committee. The petition will be circulated for two (2) weeks and one day, encompassing three (3) Sundays. If 51% of the active church membership signs in favor of the petition, it will be further submitted to the church for final action. If the signatures obtained are less than 51%, the petition will be voided and discontinuance of the pastor by church action will not be in order.

The special committee shall decide the current active membership at the time the petition is executed.

Section 2. Church Staff

This church shall call or employ such full-time staff members, as the church shall need. A job description shall be written by the Personnel Committee for all positions with church approval. When calling full-time staff (excluding the pastor) a special committee shall be formed of no less than seven (7) members, representing a cross-section of the church membership to constitute a special Search Committee to present a candidate for church approval (see Article VII, Section 29 – Special Committees).

All part time positions shall be addressed by the regular Personnel Committee.

All full-time and part-time staff shall be called or employed by church action.

Section 3. Deacons

- (1) In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The task of the deacons is to assist the pastor in performing pastoral responsibilities. The deacons shall assist the pastor in the selection of guest ministers for pulpit supply in the absence of the regular pastor.
- (2) There may be one deacon for every ten (10) families in the church. Terms for deacons shall be three consecutive years and shall be staggered so as to maintain continuity in the life of the church. After serving a term of three years, no deacon shall be eligible for re-election until the lapse of one year. Each year an election shall be held to fill the vacancies in accordance with the following procedure:

I. INITIAL STEPS:

In the annual September business meeting, the church will nominate and elect six persons to serve on a deacon selection committee, which is responsible for managing the deacon selection process for that calendar year. The pastor, chairman of deacons, and moderator will serve as ex-officio members, making a total of nine committee members. Eligibility requirements for committee members include: 25 years of age or older, a member of PSBC for at least two years, and one member must be an inactive deacon. Persons nominated for this committee shall have given their consent prior to their names being offered. Nominations must be made from the floor at the September business meeting. The clerk will distribute ballots containing blank lines for this purpose. The assistant clerk will write the names of nominees on the blackboard and see to it that votes are tallied. The committee will elect its own chairperson. Five affirmative votes will be required to pass any motion. The term of service for committee members will be one year, from September to September. The moderator shall set a date for the committee to meet soon after the business meeting to elect a chairman.

Deacon nominations must be made on a printed form provided by the deacon selection committee. Each form will contain the following information: a space to write in the candidate's name, the church's list of qualifications for deacons, an outline of the interview process, a list of deacon responsibilities, confirmation that the candidate has agreed to have his or her name put forward, a space to write in the date, and the signature of the church member nominating the deacon candidate. Church members may nominate as many candidates as they wish, but each nomination will require a separate form.

The church clerk will receive deacon nominations from church members until October 31 and promptly forward them to the chair of the deacon selection committee. All candidates must have consented to have their names put forward prior to being nominated. No person serving on this committee shall be considered as a candidate during this particular selection process. A minimum of six members is required to conduct interviews with deacon candidates. Interviews will be completed in time for the committee to present its slate of deacon nominees for approval by the congregation on the Sunday before the December business meeting. Upon approval by the church, newly elected deacons will begin serving a three-year term on January 1 of the next calendar year. Should a vacancy occur, the deacon selection committee would first return to the list of those candidates that were on the ballot and voted upon in the previous process for that year. If the vacancy could not be filled from that remaining group, then the three- month process outlined above will be followed using different dates.

II. DEACON ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

To be eligible, men and women must be at least 25 years of age, a member for two years (exception may be made for any previous member who left the church in good standing and now has rejoined). Also be, willing to serve, and live their lives according to the New Testament and the Constitution and By-Laws of this church. They must understand and be willing to meet the church's expectations for a deacon, regularly attend, and support the church through tithes and offerings. Single, married, widowed, and divorced men and women are eligible.

The attributes used to select and recommend candidates to the church are found in the following Scriptures:

1. A man or woman of honest (good) report (Acts 6:3) – a good reputation among those in the church, as well as those outside the church.
2. Full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3) – bigness of character, in spiritual outlook and personal dedication.
3. Full of wisdom (Acts 6:3) – wisdom born in a relationship with the Holy Spirit.
4. Full of faith (Acts 6:5) – like Stephen, a deacon's power depends on faith.
5. Grave (I Timothy 3:8) – one who possesses Christian purpose, who has great reverence for spiritual matters. One whose word carries weight.
6. Not double-tongued (I Timothy 3:8) – dependable and responsible in their control of their tongue.
7. Not given to much wine (I Timothy 3:8) – temperate in living, steward of good influence, doing all to the glory of God.
8. Not greedy of filthy lucre (I Timothy 3:8) – a right attitude toward material possessions, not eager to exploit others for their own gain or profit.
9. A holder of the faith (I Timothy 3:9) – a man or woman who studies the Bible regularly and gives strength to the church fellowship, and one who possesses spiritual integrity beyond reproach.
10. Tested and proved (I Timothy 3:10) – a man or woman who demonstrates his spiritual qualifications before being elected to serve as a deacon.
11. Blameless (I Timothy 3:10) – a man or woman against whom no charge of wrongdoing can be brought with success.
12. Christian family life (I Timothy 3:11-12) – a man or woman whose family is well cared for, whose family relationships are healthy and growing.
13. Husband of one wife, or wife of one husband (I Timothy 3:12) – a model of faithful devotion to one spouse, committed to the sanctity of the marriage bond.
14. Ruling their children and their own house well (I Timothy 3:12) – manages their own home well, loved and respected by their spouse and children, firm but with the compassion and tenderness of Christ.
15. Bold in the faith (I Timothy 3:13) – strong and effective because they fulfill their responsibilities as a deacon in the right way, for the right purpose.
16. Spouses should be: worthy of respect, not malicious talkers, temperate, faithful, and trustworthy in everything (I Timothy 3:11).

III. INTERVIEW WITH DEACON CANDIDATES:

The deacon selection committee will inform the deacon candidate of their nomination and set up an interview. Each candidate selected will be given a copy of the deacon eligibility requirements to review prior to the interview. If the candidate has served as a deacon at Poplar Springs Baptist Church previously and has been interviewed using the questions below, the committee can limit the interview questions to numbers 4 and 7, to receive the committee's recommendation.

Questions to be asked of candidate during the interview:

1. Please share your salvation experience and how God has been at work in your life.

2. Having read and prayed over the qualities outlined in Acts 6:3-5 and I Timothy 3:8-13, have you identified any particular area of concern about your own life? Will you strive to live your life according to these attributes and avoid being a stumbling block to others (Romans 14)?
3. Do you believe the Bible in its entirety to be the inspired Word of God? Would you please elaborate?
4. Do you agree with the beliefs, doctrinal Statement of Faith of the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message, and practices of Polar Springs Baptist Church as reflected in the church's Constitution and By-Laws?
5. What is your understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in your daily life?
6. Do you have the full support of your spouse to serve as a deacon, and is your spouse aware of their responsibility as it pertains to your qualification as a deacon?
7. Do you have any questions about the responsibilities the church expects you to fulfill? Do you understand and agree to accept these responsibilities?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add or ask?

IV. DEACON RESPONSIBILITIES:

Act as a servant of the church and encourage members in serving, worshiping, and giving. Attend Sunday School and worship regularly; attend business meetings, attend deacons' meetings and special meetings when needed; serve Communion; take greeting assignments; assist the pastor; pray for the pastor, staff, and church; take leadership in conducting prayer services; assist the pastor in pulpit supply/revival services; take assignments in visitation; support and administer the deacon family ministry plan; make recommendations regarding deacon ministry; serve as spiritual counselor and reconciler; guard the unity and harmony in the church; support the church's mission efforts; support the church's denominational and associational ties; and support and abide by the church's Constitution and By-Laws.

V. FINAL VOTE BY THE CHURCH:

The congregation will vote on deacon candidates on the Sunday preceding the December business meeting. Ballots will contain the names of all candidates who have been interviewed and recommended by the deacon selection committee, and a statement of how many deacons are currently needed. Each church member 16 years of age or older may vote for as few or as many candidates up to the number of deacons currently needed. Members must sign the envelopes in which the ballots are placed in order to be counted. Those deacon candidates receiving two-thirds (2/3) vote of members voting will be deemed eligible to serve. The Deacon Selection Committee will tally the votes to determine a list of those receiving a two-thirds (2/3) vote. Based on the number of new deacons required, the Committee will announce the new deacons at the December business meeting. Election will be determined by the votes garnered in descending order

- (3) The deacons shall elect their officers and shall be organized to assist the pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the church.

In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the church may elect a replacement, in accordance with the above procedure, to fill the unexpired term.

Section 4. Moderator

The moderator shall be elected by the church and shall conduct all business meetings scheduled by the church and serve as an ex-officio member of all committees. In his absence, the vice-moderator shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

Section 5. Clerk

The church-elected clerk shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the action of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with

dates of admission, dismissal, death, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissing voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office when one is maintained.

Section 6. Treasurer

The church shall elect a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting a report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding period. The treasurer's record shall be audited annually by the Finance Budget committee within 90 days after the close of the calendar year and this committee will make a report thereon at the next regular business meeting of the church.

Section 7. Financial Secretary

The Financial Secretary shall be elected by the church. He/she shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper person selected by the church to serve in turn, and from these he/she shall give donors individual credit. He/she shall keep the envelopes for a period of two years. He/she will fill out the sheet for the monthly balance, which will indicate receipts from envelopes, plate or loose, and miscellaneous or special offerings. He/she shall also be responsible for preparing and mailing records of contributions to all contributing members by January 31st of the following year.

Section 8. Trustees

Four (4) trustees shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church for each to serve for an indefinite period of time at the pleasure of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of all trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging, or purchase or rental of property or other legal documents (contracts or obligations in excess of \$5,000). They shall also maintain general supervision of the cemetery as authorized by the church.

Section 9. Associational Representatives

The church shall elect annually two (2) lay members to represent the church at all executive committee meetings of the associational meetings and make a report to the church at the next regular business meeting.

VII. COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES

Section 1. General

All church committee and council members shall be members of the church selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church unless otherwise indicated in description below. The committee members shall serve for one year unless otherwise noted. No member may serve on more than three (3) committees during the same year (**excluding Special Committees**). Each committee chairman shall be named by the Nominating Committee unless otherwise noted. The following committees shall be elected:

- a. To assure continuity and knowledge of the duties of a committee from year to year; at least two (2) committee members shall be selected from the standing committee to serve another year.

- b. Committee meetings should be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order Revised, and a majority of committee members shall approve ideas/decisions affecting the church (see Article 9, Section 6 – Parliamentary Rules).

Section 2. Audio Visual Committee

The Audio Visual Committee shall consist of no less than five (5) members chosen by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. Committee members will be selected based on experience and particular interest in this field of responsibility. They will be responsible for overseeing acquisition, maintenance and repair of all visual, recording, special lighting and sound equipment (excluding musical instruments owned by the church). This committee is responsible for supplying experienced individuals during all church functions as required. When needed, equipment replacement and/or repair will be recommended after consultation with professionals in these fields.

Section 3. Buildings and Grounds Committee

This committee shall consist of no less than seven (7) members. There shall be a co-chair for grounds and co-chair for buildings. This committee shall be responsible for the maintenance and care of the church buildings and grounds and shall supervise any physical changes to be made.

Section 4. Bus Committee

The Bus Committee shall consist of no less than three (3) members selected for their ability to drive, supervise and monitor the bus routes. They shall keep the buses in repair and see that they are on schedule as required. They shall keep a list of qualified drivers. If the bus should be desired for group transportation by another committee, the Bus Committee shall be consulted well in advance so the proper arrangements can be made.

Section 5. Church Council

(1) The primary functions of the council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.

(2) The Council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall have as regular members the Pastor (chairman), Associate Pastor, Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Sunday School Director, Woman's Missionary Union Director, Brotherhood Director, Director of Youth, Music Director, Chairman of Deacons, Chairman of Trustees, and Outreach Leader.

(3) All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already provided for, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

Section 6. Church-Minister Relations Team

The Church-Minister Relations Team (The Team) will be composed of no less than three (3) church members consisting of both males and females (excluding staff) who serve on a three-year rotation term. The Team serves as a liaison support group between the Pastor and congregation. This Team assures that the Pastor and his family has a support group to which they can turn to for counsel and advice. The Team provides a communication link between the congregation and the Pastor.

Section 7. Children's Church Committee

The Children's Church Committee shall consist of no less than five (5) members who are teachers in the Children's Church Ministry. These individuals will assist in the planning and the administration to carry out the Children's Church Mission. The mission of the Children's Church Ministry is to encourage

children to look at their relationship to Jesus Christ. Children are taught age appropriate lessons using material that clearly demonstrate the love of God and the message of His Son Jesus Christ.

Section 8. Christian Life Center Committee

The Christian Life Center Ministry Committee shall consist of no less than five (5) members. The Associate Pastor (Minister of Christian Life Activities) shall be an ex-officio member of this committee. This committee will assist and support the Minister of Christian Life Activities regarding the overall management, administration, organization and use of the Christian Life Center, including all recreational activities and teams sponsored by Poplar Springs Baptist Church. The Christian Life Center Committee shall be responsible for maintaining all sporting equipment. The purpose and objectives of the church will be considered in planning all events.

Section 9. Community Aid Committee

This committee shall consist of no less than three (3) members and shall investigate any physical needs in our church and community, and administer to their needs in the name of Christ. They shall make a report to the pastor of each action taken and shall expend funds within the limits of their budget.

Section 10. Constitution and By-laws Committee

This committee, composed of no less than five (5) members, shall study the constitution and bylaws and rule on any question or interpretation arising from them. They shall receive recommendations for change in writing from the membership and then make recommendations to the church concerning necessary changes.

Section 11. Educational Scholarship Committee

The Educational Scholarship Committee shall consist of no less than six (6) members elected by the church. The administration of the endowment fund shall be the responsibility of this committee. These responsibilities include determination of scholarship eligibility, the investment of the principal, management of the income account, and disbursement of the income to qualified applicants.

Section 12. Finance and Budget Committee

The Finance and Budget Committee shall be composed of no less than five (5) members. The church treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of this committee. The committee shall meet at the call of the pastor or the chairman. They shall have charge of the financial affairs of the church. They shall prepare the annual budget and present it no later than a December business meeting. The expenditure of any funds not included in the budget must be cleared through the Finance Committee before presentation to the church for approval. At the end of each church year, this committee shall be responsible for auditing the books of the treasurer and other funds that affect the entire congregation and make a report to the church within 180 days of the close of the calendar year (see Article VI, Section 6 – Treasurer).

Section 13. Flower and Baptism Committee

The Flower and Baptism Committee shall be composed of no less than six (6) members elected by the church. Each member shall be assigned two (2) months of the church year to place flowers in the sanctuary for worship services. In the event of death in a church member's immediate family, this committee shall provide flowers in the name of the church. This committee shall also be responsible for placing poinsettias at Christmas and flowers for other special occasions. It shall be the duty of this committee to make all necessary arrangements for the administration of the ordinance of baptism and to assist the pastor and the candidates in the performance of same.

Section 14. Hospitality/Bereavement Committee

The Hospitality/Bereavement Committee shall consist of no less than seven (7) members. This committee shall be responsible for the organization/coordination of special dinners for the church body (such as People-to-People Day and funeral receptions) held in the Christian Life Center. Funeral receptions would be for church members or their immediate family members (husband, wife, children, and parents). The CLC may be used by non-members, but the Hospitality/Bereavement Committee would not be responsible for the set up, food, or cleanup. This committee is also to ensure guests are treated in a warm, friendly and hospitable manner while visiting during these special events. Additional duties shall include calling fellow church members to bring food for these events and setting up tables and chairs and the clean-up that follows (involving as much of the church family as possible).

Section 15. Library Committee

The Library Committee shall consist of no less than five (5) members and shall assume control over all books, publications, printed matter, other than current matter used by the respective departments. It shall organize a systematic method of catalogue and storing such material and a system whereby it can be made available to the membership under proper precautions of preservation and return. It shall be the duty of this committee to promote the habit of reading and study.

Section 16. Missionary Residence Committee

The Missionary Residence shall consist of no less than seven (7) members elected by the church. They are responsible for the administration (to include correspondence and scheduling) and maintenance of the house, furnishings, and grounds that comprise the missionary residence, and also for the Missionary Residence Fund.

Section 17. Music Committee

This committee shall consist of no less than five (5) members. The music director shall be an ex-officio member of this committee. The Music Committee may consist of a member from the Adult Choir, a Youth Choir leader, a Children's Choir leader, a member from the Praise Team, an Instrumentalist, a Sound person, one active member interested in music from the Early Service and one active member interested in music from the Late Service. It shall be the duty of this committee to have general charge of matters in connection with the music program of the church, to include maintenance of musical instruments owned by the church. It may recommend suitable persons for organists and choristers and other such positions as may be authorized.

Section 18. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall be composed of no less than seven (7) members. It shall be nominated by the Church Council and elected by the church to serve for the ensuing year. Nominating Committee members are to serve on a three (3) year rotating term, and that rotation is to begin with the longest serving member being the first to rotate off. Its duty is to nominate all annually elected officers and committees of the church. The Nominating Committee is to have available to the church membership a list of proposed committee changes for the upcoming year one week prior to the fourth Quarterly Business Meeting. Nominations may also be made from the floor for all offices provided the nominee has given prior consent and indicated his or her willingness to serve.

WMU, Brotherhood, and Sunday School Directors are elected at the March business meeting. This affords the directors time to find teachers and leaders who can be elected in June. Again, this gives time for directors and teachers to review materials and prepare plans for a successful start-up in September for the new year.

Section 19. Nursery Committee

The Nursery Committee shall consist of no less than three (3) members elected by the church. They shall be responsible for staffing the nurseries during the worship services each Sunday and for special services such as revivals.

Section 20. Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee shall consist of no less than seven (7) members who will serve for a three-year rotating term, with one of the members being an active deacon. The Nominating Committee will select a chairperson, considering the input of the Personnel Committee members in this decision. To adequately prepare new members for participation on the Committee, new members will be voted on by the Congregation by September 30, allowing these replacements to attend committee meetings (in a non-voting capacity) through the end of the calendar year. The Personnel Committee is responsible for the oversight and administration of employment and employee related matters for the church, and shall perform an annual evaluation of the pastor's performance. The Personnel Committee also oversees written agreements and relationships with parties that require tax reporting (1099).

Section 21. Usher Committee

The Usher Committee shall consist of a head usher, assistant-head usher and no less than twelve (12) ushers selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. It shall be the duty of this committee to welcome members and visitors and ~~to~~ see that they are seated comfortably. They shall have someone at all doorways to distribute the bulletins and church information. Ushers are to be at doorways 10 minutes before service begins if their name is in the bulletin for that month. Ushers shall arrange for the collection of the worship service offering and may be asked to say the offertory prayer.

Section 22. Wednesday Evening Dinner Committee

The Wednesday Evening Dinner Committee shall consist of no less than four (4) members. This committee shall, on an annual basis, interview and recommend a caterer to the church. This committee shall supervise and work closely with the caterer to prepare the Wednesday evening dinner. This committee shall also be responsible for recruiting and organizing a rotating work crew. The duties of this work crew shall be to assist in the preparation, serving, and cleanup of the meal. They shall be responsible for setting up and taking down the tables and chairs in the eating area for the Wednesday evening dinners.

Section 23. Worship Committee

This committee shall consist of no less than seven (7) members selected by the Nominating Committee with representation from all Worship Services. The Associate Pastor and Music Director shall be ex-officio members of this committee. The committee will serve for a three (3) year rotating term and that rotation will begin with the longest serving member being the first to rotate off.

The committee's objective is to assist the Pastor in providing for an enriching worship experience with God every Sunday that meets the diverse worship needs of our community in a way that will draw us closer to Christ, strengthen our commitment to His church, and grow in numbers.

The Worship Committee will work with the Pastor to sustain the highest quality of worship experience that meets the needs of members and guests, to provide support in facilitating and coordinating the worship services, to offer suggestions to enhance the worship experience, and to prepare for additional services as needed.

Section 24. Youth Council

The Youth Council shall consist of the Associate Pastor, Youth Director, two boys and two girls representing the age groups of Youth I and Youth II (from either Youth I, Youth II Sunday School, Youth on Mission, or Power Hour) and three adults (parents of the youth). The Youth Council shall be responsible for planning, developing, and coordinating activities and ministries for the youth of our church. The Youth Director shall serve as the Youth Council Director and shall represent the Youth Council on the Church Council. The Youth Director shall coordinate youth plans and activities with the church's calendar and submit any recommendations requiring church approval through the Church Council.

Section 25. Special Committees

Special committees shall be elected for the specific obligations as desired by the church. These committees shall be elected by the church upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee unless the church directs their appointment in a different manner.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reported regularly to the church. It is understood that the pastor is an ex-officio officer of all the organizations named, and his leadership is to be recognized in them.

Section 2. Sunday School

There shall be a Sunday School divided into departments and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of a Sunday School Director for the study of God's Word. The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the biblical revelation; lead in reaching all prospects for the church; lead all church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

a. Director for the Sunday School

The director shall be elected at the March Business Meeting by the church upon the recommendation from the Nominating Committee and shall take office as of June 1 of that year. The director shall recommend to the Nominating Committee for election, such general officers and teachers as may be needed to carry out the teaching programs of the church. These shall be elected each year and shall be members of the church. The director shall administer the program of the Sunday School in a manner that will result in maximum spiritual growth of the members. The director shall strive to attain and maintain a standard Sunday School literature that is to be consistent with the Constitution and ByLaws of this church, and with approval of the pastor and subsequently the Church Council, and the church if requested. It shall be the duty of the Sunday School Director to hold regular meetings of the officers and department director for the purpose of advancing and building the Sunday School program. This meeting shall be known as the Sunday School Council. The term of office shall not exceed three (3) years consecutively.

Section 3. Sunday Evening Services

Sunday evenings at church are an open time for scheduled meeting, special events, and/or special interest studies or ministries (Examples include: music events, prayer gatherings, marriage enrichment studies, youth ministry, singles ministry, Bible studies, craft nights, committee and/or organization meetings, etc.)

The Church Council shall coordinate these activities and where deemed necessary request church approval.

Section 4. Woman's Missionary Union

There shall be a Woman's Missionary Union with such officers and such forms of organizations as needed. The mission focus of the Woman's Missionary Union shall be to pray for and give to missions, do missions, teach missions, develop spiritually toward a missions lifestyle and participate in the work of the church and denomination.

a. WMU Director

The director shall be elected at the March Business Meeting by the church upon recommendation from the church Nominating Committee. Other leaders, directors, teachers, or facilitators will be elected by the WMU Nominating Committee under the direction of the WMU Director. These leaders, directors, teachers, and facilitators should be voted on by the church body. The Director shall supervise the organization and direction of the groups of the WMU. She shall present a report on WMU activities at its regular business meetings and an annual budget request to the Budget and Finance Committee. The WMU and its groups will sponsor missionary activities and provide directors, leaders, teachers, or facilitators for each of the groups.

b. WMU Secretary

The secretary shall be elected by the WMU Nominating Committee. She shall be responsible for ordering subscription materials and mission study materials for all groups of the WMU. She should order materials based on the needs of each group in accord with the desires of the directors/leaders of each organization.

c. WMU Council

The council shall be made of a minimum of one representative – leader or director – from each of the WMU organizations, the WMU Secretary, and the WMU Director. The WMU Director will serve as chairman, calling meetings as necessary to serve the WMU organizations. Its purposes are: (1) to plan, organize and coordinate mission activities, (2) to provide and/or inform leaders training, and (3) to encourage, support, and mentor leaders.

Section 5. Brotherhood

The Brotherhood organization shall consist of the Baptist Men and the Royal Ambassadors under the leadership of a brotherhood director and any other officers as needed to administer the Brotherhood program and to encourage and to promote mission study and activities. The Director shall be elected at the March Business Meeting by the church upon recommendation from the Nominating Committee. The Brotherhood Council shall consist of the Brotherhood Director, the Baptist Men's president, and the Royal Ambassador's Director.

a. Baptist Men

The Baptist Men's organization shall be open to all men of the church and be led by a president who shall be elected by the church upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee. His responsibilities included mission action, mission study, and the support of ongoing mission activities of the church.

b. Royal Ambassadors

The Royal Ambassador program shall be led by a director and counselors who shall be elected by the church, upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee. Their tasks are to teach missions, organize and lead all work concerning missions and to help develop good sportsmanship, cooperation and the love of God among the young men and boys of the church community through Royal Ambassadors.

Section 6. Music Ministry

There shall be a music ministry under the direction of a music committee in conjunction with the choir director and pastor. Such officers and organizations shall be included as needed to provide a program of music within the church.

Section 7. Vacation Bible School

There shall be a Vacation Bible School divided into departments and classes for children and youth conducted under the leadership of a director for study of God's Word. It will be held for one week during the summer.

a. Vacation Bible School Director: On recommendation by the Nominating Committee, the director shall be elected annually by the church. Teachers and workers will be appointed by the director.

Section 8. Literature

All literature employed by the educational ministries of the church shall be consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of this church, and with approval of the pastor and subsequently the Church Council, and the church if requested.

IX. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services

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

a. Occasional special religious meetings may be scheduled by the pastor and Church Council for worship and spiritual devotion and when possible, there shall be no other church-sponsored group activities during the time of these religious meetings.

Section 2. Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held quarterly on an announced Sunday or Wednesday night. Should there be any unusual business or matter of unusual interest to be brought before such regular quarterly meeting, notice and agenda shall be given the membership one week prior to the meeting.

Section 3. Special Business Meetings

A specially called business meeting may be held to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week notice including agenda must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impracticable.

Section 4. Quorum

The nature of the business to be considered will determine the number of members that must be present in order to constitute a quorum.

When amendments to the constitution or bylaws are to be considered, then fifty (50) voting members will constitute a quorum.

When calling a pastor is to be considered, then 100 voting members will constitute a quorum. Likewise, 125 voting members will be necessary when considering the termination of a pastor's services unless the

terminating of services are at the request of the pastor, which will only require a majority of the members present.

When considering church business other than previously stated, a quorum shall consist of thirty (30) church members of voting age as of the previous church year report. This constituted quorum shall be made up of voting age members.

Section 5. Voting Age

All church members who have reached the age of 16 years or older shall be eligible to vote at all business meetings of the church.

Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order Revised is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure of business meetings of the church, the deacons, and the committees.

Section 7. Fiscal and Church Year

The fiscal year of the church shall run concurrently with the calendar year, which begins on January 1 and ends on December 31. The church year shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

X. CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1.

The Finance Budget Committee, in consultation with the Church Council, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicated by items the amount needed and sought for all local and worldwide expenses.

Section 2.

All funds, for any and all purposes, shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer and be properly recorded on the books of the church. No special offerings shall be taken without prior church authorization. Designated gifts will be accepted for purposes, which have been approved by the church body.

Section 3.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts (see Constitution – Articles of Faith – 13. Stewardship).

XI. DISCIPLINE

Section 1.

Should any unhappy differences arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in the eighteenth (18th) chapter of Matthew.

Section 2.

Should any case of gross breach of covenant, of public scandal occur, the deacons shall endeavor to remove the offense; and if this effort fails, shall report the case to the church.

Section 3.

All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

Section 4.

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the church, upon evidence of his repentance and reformation; or, if an account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

XII. AMENDMENTS

Changes in this constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church where a quorum of 50 voting members is present, provide:

- a. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of church members present and entitled to vote.
- b. Amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

XIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

This constitution and bylaws will become effective upon adoption and remain in full effect until subsequently amended in accordance with Article XII.

Revised March 17, 2010
Constitution and Bylaws Committee
Diane Stone, Chairperson