

# CONSTITUTION

including

Covenant and Articles of Faith

## BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH



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Name:



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## ***Preamble***

Reposing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation; believing in the teaching and practices of the Baptists based upon the verbally-inspired Word of God; holding the distinctive principles for which Baptists have ever stood; we, therefore, banding ourselves together as a body of our government, plan of worship and service, do present the following Articles. We hereby rescind all previous action contrary thereto.

## ***Article I ~ Name***

The name of this church shall be Berean Baptist Church, Unaffiliated.

## ***Article II ~ Purpose***

1. This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes as the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, day care centers, camps, nursing homes, and cemeteries, and any other ministries that the church may be led of God to establish.
2. The church shall also ordain and license men to the gospel ministry; evangelize the unsaved by the proclaiming of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education; maintain missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country; and engage in any other ministry that the church may decide, from time to time, to pursue in obedience to the will of God.

## ***Article III ~ Articles of Faith***

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of this church and its members:

1. **The Bible: God's Word.** We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings (2Ti 3:16-17; 2Pe 1:21), and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life (1Co 2:13; 10:11; 2Ti 3:17). Berean Baptist Church uses only the KJV, NKJV, ESV, and NASB in its preaching, teaching, and discipleship ministries because of the degree to which the translators of these Bibles faithfully sought to provide an essentially literal, word-for-word translation from the original Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic into English. Additionally, these Bibles emphasize the deity and supremacy of Jesus Christ, preserve the importance of unique theological words like "justification" and "propitiation," and maintain God-ordained gender distinctions. We believe these are some of the standards by which the believer must measure all Bibles. Members of BBC should be cautious about using Bibles (i.e. NIV, TNIV, NRSV) which are not committed to preserving the words of the original manuscripts; paraphrases (i.e. NLT, The Message) cannot be understood to be the Word of God. We reject any suggestion that any English Bible is supreme to manuscripts in the original languages. We further deny that the Bible specifies the manner in which God would preserve His Word, however we absolutely affirm God's promise to do so (Mat 5:18; John 10:35) and His providential control over historical events so that His Word has been fully preserved by careful processes in all available manuscripts and translations of the Scripture (Psa 119:89; Isa 46:8-11). Furthermore, we reject any theory of double or secondary inspiration.
2. **God the Creator.** We accept the Genesis account of creation (Gen 1:1; Exo 20:2-3) and believe that man came by direct creation of God and not by evolution (Col 1:16, 17; John 1:3; Rev 4:11). We believe in one God who is Creator of heaven and earth; who is Spirit, light, love, truth, eternal, almighty, infallible, unchangeable, infinitely wise, just, holy; and that God eternally exists in Three Persons: Father, Son (John 10:30; 1Co 8:6) and Holy Spirit (Gen 1:2; 2Co 13:14).

3. **Jesus Christ: God's Son.** We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the Eternal Word manifested in flesh. We believe that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary (Is 7:14; 9:6; Mat 1:18-25; Luke 1:30-35), and that He is both the Son of God and God the Son (John 1:1-2,14,18; 3:16; Phl 2:5-8). We believe that our Lord arose from the dead, according to the Scriptures, and in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:20; Acts 2:32), and that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which, at the return of Christ, will be given to all resurrected believers (1Co 15:23, 42-45; Phl 3:20-21). We believe that our Lord ascended to heaven (Heb 1:3), is seated at His Father's right hand (Heb 1:13) assuring us of the perfection of His work of redemption, and that He now as Head over all things to the church (Eph 1:22-23) is engaged on behalf of the saved as Intercessor (Heb 7:25) and Advocate (1Jo 2:1).
  
4. **The Holy Spirit.** We believe that the Holy Spirit, being the third Person of the Godhead, convicts men of sin (John 16:7-11), regenerates (John 3:6), indwells (John 14:17; Rom 8:9; 1Co 3:16; 6:19), baptizes (1Co 12:13), comforts (John 14:26), seals (Eph 1:13; 4:30), and fills (Eph 5:18)—setting believers apart to a holy life; and that He keeps and empowers believers day by day (Rom 8:2,4,12,14). We believe that He is the Teacher of the Word of God and our Guide for daily life (1Jo 2:20-27; 1Pe 1:1). We believe that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the giving of spiritual gifts to every believer for the equipping of the saints (Rom 12:3-8, 1Pe 4:10-11). God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:7-12). We believe that speaking in tongues and working sign miracles (1Co 1:22; 14:22,28) in the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and sign miracles were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of all believers. (1Co 12:4-11, 28; Heb 2:1-4). We believe the "tongues" described in Acts 2:4-11, 10:46, and 19:6 was the supernatural ability to speak in a known language that did not need an interpreter. Moreover, we believe that the way "tongues" is practiced in some churches is akin to the confusion Paul criticizes in 1Co 14:23, 26, 33 and is not of God. We believe that God can heal any time He chooses to, but the "apostolic gift of healing" (not to be confused with miracles God performs today) (1Co 12:9-10; 1Co 12:29-30) was for the apostolic age (Mark 16:17-20); it accompanied the apostles (2Co 12:12); it was a sign primarily to unbelieving Jews (1Co 1:22) and is, therefore, no longer widespread, normal, or necessary during the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24; Rom 11:25). We furthermore acknowledge that, though Paul was perhaps the greatest healer of the New Testament (Acts 20:9, 28:8), he could neither heal himself (2Co 12:7-10) nor his closest friends and associates (1Ti 5:23; 2Ti 4:20). We do find solace in knowing that God does heal within His will and sometimes answers the prayers of His people for healing (James 5:13-18) and that He is, by nature, a God who takes pleasure in the wellness of His people (Exo 15:26), but this should in no way interfere with Christians seeking medical attention when necessary.
  
5. **Satan: the Fallen One.** We believe there is a personal devil, a being of great cunning and power (Job 1:6-7; Eze 28:11-19; Isa 14:12-17; Mat 4:1-11) who is "The prince of the air" (Eph 2:2), "The prince of this world" (John 12:31), and "The god of this age" (2Co 4:4). We believe that he can exert vast power but only so far as God suffers him to do so and that he shall ultimately be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and shall be tormented day and night forever (Rev 20:10).
  
6. **Man and His Sin.** We believe that man was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God (Gen 1:26) that he fell through sin (Gen 2:17); that he, as a consequence of his sin, lost his spiritual life (John 6:53), becoming dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-3; 1Ti 5:6), and that he became subject to the power of the devil (1Jo 3:8). We also believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity of human nature (Gen 6:5, John 3:6; 5:40), has been transmitted to the entire human race of man (Psa 14:1-3; 51:5; Jer 17:9) the Man Christ Jesus alone being excepted; and, hence, that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of divine life, but is essentially corrupt in body, mind, and soul (Rom 3:10-19; 8:6,7).

7. **God's Salvation of Mankind.** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins (1Pe 2:24; 3:18) according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice (John 1:29; 2Co 5:14; Heb 10:5-19), and that all who believe in Him (Acts 16:31; Rom 10:9,10) are justified on the ground of His shed blood (Rom 3:25-26; 1Jo 1:7). We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior are instantaneously born again of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8) and thereby become the children of God (John 1:12, 13; 3:16; 5:24; 14:16; Rom 8:16). We believe in the eternal security (John 10:28, 29; 8:31; 13:1; 17:11) and everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the eternal conscious punishment of the lost (Mat 25:41; Mark 9:42-48; Rev 20:11-15). The preservation of all believers rests upon the finished work of Christ, the promises of God (Phl 1:6; Heb 7:25; 1Pe 1:5; 1Jo 5:4, 18; Jude 24), the gracious election, and the sovereign predestination of God (Rom 8:28-39).

## 8. **The Church:**

- a. We believe that the Church of Jesus Christ (Mat 16:16-18; Titus 3:7) is composed solely of those who have been redeemed (Titus 2:14), washed in His blood (Rev 1:5), regenerated (Titus 3:5) and sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14). We believe that they are saved to worship and to serve; and that they should seek to live a holy life by separating themselves from and forsaking all that might dishonor God, cast discredit on His cause, or weaken their testimony (Titus 3:12).
- b. We believe that it is the responsibility and privilege of all who are saved to seek to win others to Christ, to the "uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8); that God has given the church a Great Commission to proclaim the gospel to all nations (Mat 28:19-20) so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21). As ambassadors of Christ, we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us (2Co 5:20).
- c. We believe that Christ instituted the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19, 20) to be observed until He comes (1Co 11:23-26). We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer (Mat 28:19-20; Acts 10:47; 19:5) in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It pictures our death to sin and resurrection to a new life and it is a prerequisite to church membership (Acts 8:36-39; John 3:23; Mat 3:16; Col 2:12). We believe that the Lord's Supper is the showing forth of His death until He comes again and should always be preceded by self-examination (1Co 11:23-38).
- d. We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members (1Co 6:1-8; Eph 4:31-32). We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander.
- e. We believe that God intends marriage to last until one spouse dies (Mal 2:14-17; Mat 19:3-12; Rom 7:1-3). When circumstances cause a believer to become legally separated or estranged from their spouse, they must hold fast to the truth of Scripture and seek the healing of their marriage devoting their time and energy to that pursuit. There is absolutely no reason for a married person who is separated to seek out, allow, or cultivate the romantic affections of a person or people who are not their current spouse. This would include close friendships with the opposite sex that could lead to what would be seen as a dating relationship. Further, the separated believer should wholeheartedly seek the restoration of their marriage until it is no longer possible within biblical standards (i.e. remarriage or death). (1Co 7:10-11) Recognizing the nature of sin and the redemptive power of Jesus Christ, the church does allow remarried or divorced men to hold positions of leadership, to include deacon and elder, provided there is longitudinal evidence that they have established a reputation that meets the "husband of one wife" or more precisely, the original language's "one woman man" requirement found within the Biblical qualifications for those positions (1Ti 3:2,12; Titus 1:6). We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God (Gal 3:28) but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home (Col 3:18; 1Ti 3:4-5, 12) and church (1Ti 2:8-15). The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors, elders and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church.

- f. We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving (Gen 14:20; Pro 3:9-10) but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church (Acts 4:34-37; 1Co 16:2; 2Co 9:6-7; Gal 6:6; Eph 4:28; 1Tim. 5:17-18), the relief of those in need (1Jo 3:17), and the spread of the gospel.
- g. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (Gen 2:24; Gen 26:8-9; 1Co 7:1-16; Heb 13:4). We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Gen 19:5,13; Lev 18:1-30; Rom 1:26-29; 1Co 5:1; 6:9; 1Th 4:1-8). We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman (Gen 2:24; Mark 10:6-12; Rom 7:2; 1Co 7:10). We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society (Deu 6:4-9). The husband is to love the wife as Christ loves the church (Eph 5:21-33). The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ (Eph 5:22-23; Phl 2:10, 11).
- h. We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being (Gen 1:26-28; Psa 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa 44:24, 49:1, 5; Jer 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44; Acts 17:28). Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth, population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention (Exo 20:13, 23:7; Job 3:16; Mat 5:21). Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus, we believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God (Exo 20:12). Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal or over-zealous treatment.
- i. Children are an heritage from the Lord (Psa 127:3-5). Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example (Col 3:18-21; 1Pe 3:1-7) and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction (Pro 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Eph 6:1-4).
- j. We believe that Christians may cause a weaker brother or sister to stumble or be offended by the consumption of wine, beer, and other alcoholic beverages, (Rom 14:21, 1Co 8:9) and that being intoxicated is forbidden (Eph 5:18, 1Co 6:9b.-10, 11:21) and is a work of the flesh (Gal 5:21, 1Pe 4:2-3). Drunkenness brings reproach to the cause of Christ and has negative effects on the human body, the family, and the body of Christ. We base this position on the words of our Lord Jesus who tells us that being intoxicated may keep us from being ready for His imminent return (Luke 21:34) and numerous biblical passages that prohibit drunkenness because of the negative effects of alcohol such as the following: physical and emotional suffering, strife, and sorrow (Pro 23:29-30); poverty (Pro 21:17, 23:21); sexual immorality (Gen 9:21, Rom 13:13); a disregard for the work of the Lord (Isa 5:12); error in judgment (Pro 20:1, Isa 28:7); loss of friendships and relationships (1Co 5:11); and punishment from God (Mat 24:49-51). Based on an objective analysis of all that the Word of God presents concerning alcohol, the church encourages its members, by the grace of God, to adopt a personal total abstinence standard. Furthermore, BBC believes the medicinal and purifying aspects of wine are no longer necessary for life in the twenty-first century. Pastors (1Ti 3:3), elders, deacons, teachers, supervisors, directors, and employees of the church are prohibited from consuming any alcoholic beverage based on the spirit and intent of Leviticus 10:9 and Proverbs 31:4-5.
- k. We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good of human society and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored (Mat 10:10; 22:21; Rom 13:17; 1Pe 2:17), and obeyed (Titus 3:1; 1Pe 2:13-14) except in things opposed to the Word of God - the Bible (Exo 18:21, 22; 2Sa 23:3; Psa 72:11; Acts 4:19, 20; 5:20; 23:5; Rev 10:16).
- l. We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining

personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions.

m. We believe that God sovereignly creates each person as immutably male or female and that God assigns gender and biological sex (Psa 139:3, Isa 29:16, Mat 19:4). We reject any suggestion that there are more than two genders. We believe that these two distinct complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God, stated implicitly by both God the Father (Gen 1:26-27) and the Lord Jesus Christ (Mat 19:4). Therefore, the rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person (Gen 1:26-27; 5:2). We believe that God is not the author of gender confusion (1Co 14:33) and that transgender behavior is a violation of God's Holy Law (Deu 22:5). We believe that any interpretation of Galatians 3:28 that removes gender differences in the body of Christ is a heretical interpretation of the sacred text. We know that living within the sex assigned at conception and normally revealed at birth is always God's will for each individual's life on this earth.

9. **End Times:** We believe in the blessed hope that at the end of this present age, Jesus Christ will return to this earth personally, visibly, physically, and triumphantly with great power and glory. He will gather the elect, judge in righteousness both the living and the dead, reward the saints, bring about the ultimate defeat of Satan, lift the curse, create a new heaven and a new earth, and establish His eternal kingdom. (Titus 2:13, Mat 24:30, Acts 1:11, 2Ti 4:1, 2Co 5:10, Rev 11:15, 20:10, 21:10, 22:3, 2Pe 1:11, 3:13). We believe Christ's Second Coming will be preceded by a period of great tribulation unlike anything the world has ever seen and will be accompanied by the raising of the dead, both the just and the unjust, to determine each man's eternal fate. (Mat 24:21-30, Acts 24:15, Dan 12:2, Acts 17:31, 1Co 15:52, 1Th 4:16-17). We believe the destiny of the righteous, God's elect, will be dwelling and reigning with God on the new earth forever, and the destiny of anyone whose name is not written in the book of life is the second death, conscious eternal torment in the lake of fire. (Mat 25:46, John 14.3, Rev 20:14-15, 21:3, 22:5). We believe that the desire of all true Christians is "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen." (Rev 22:20)

These Articles of Faith do not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Articles of Faith accurately represent the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, are binding upon all members, staff and volunteers.

#### ***Article IV ~ Our Covenant***

As a bond of unity among us, Berean Baptist Church accepts for its members the following covenant:

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and upon our profession of our faith in Him, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We fully realize that the strength to uphold this covenant comes from the grace of God our Father, the shed blood of God the Son, and the power of the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

We promise to actively pursue personal holiness; to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church's spiritual growth and unity; to faithfully abide by the doctrines and behaviors outlined in this church's Articles of Faith; and to give cheerfully of our time, talents, and finances for the support of this ministry and its missionaries.

We further promise to faithfully attend the church's worship services, to maintain personal spiritual disciplines; to teach our children the Word of God; to share the gospel with our relatives and acquaintances; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements; and to avoid all gossip. We promise that we will love and pray for each other and in times of distress help one another.

We promise to endeavor to obey the commandments of our Lord Jesus and to abstain from anything that would cause our fellow brother or sister in Christ to stumble or that will bring reproach to the name of Jesus Christ.

We further realize that if we should fail to live up to the promises we have made, our brothers and sisters in Christ will always strive for our reconciliation and spiritual restoration. However, if we partake in a sustained and unrepentant violation of an Article of Faith, we will be brought under church discipline in accordance with the Church Constitution.

We make this covenant with each other for the express purpose of glorifying God as the visible representation of the body of Christ.

### ***Article V ~ Membership***

1. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP: Upon a majority vote of the members present at any church service or meeting, membership shall be extended to all who have had and whose lives evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; who endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord; who fully subscribe to the Articles of Faith contained herein; who enter into the Church Covenant contained herein; who agree to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders as set forth herein; who have completed the membership class; who have presented themselves for membership; and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:

- A. By baptism by immersion; or,
- B. By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized by immersion subsequent to a profession of faith; or,
- C. By testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion; or,
- D. By restoration, if having been removed from membership, upon majority vote of the congregation after confession is made publicly before the church membership of the sin or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance to the elders.

2. DUTIES OF A MEMBER: On becoming a member of BBC, in addition to the Church Covenant, each one further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the elders, to pray for them and to recognize their authority in the spiritual affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church in prayer, tithes, offerings and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and, in accordance with biblical commands, to support through a life-style affirming the beliefs and practices of the church.

3. PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP: This congregation functions as a body under the Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the elders. The internal affairs of this church in ecclesiastical matters shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The Senior Pastor in consultation with the elders, deacons and trustees, shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church. The membership of the church has certain limited areas of exercising a vote. Members are encouraged to bring important matters to the elders for discussion and consideration by the leadership of the church. Only members at least sixteen years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. The eligible membership of the church has certain limited areas to exercise a vote. Members may not vote to initiate any church action, rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the Senior Pastor and the elders.

Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services,



the church property remains private property. The elders have the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may be treated as a trespasser. A member may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church and the minutes of the proceedings of members' meetings, provided he shall have made a written request upon the church and the church has received the written request at least five business days before the requested inspection date.

- A. A member may not, under any circumstance, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, the list of names and addresses of the church members, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.
- B. The church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.

#### 4. DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER:

- A. As necessary, the elders shall form a Disciplinary Committee. These men shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Articles of Faith and violations of the Church Covenant. If an elder is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not be a member of the Discipline Committee.
- B. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.
- C. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
- D. The Senior Pastor, an elder or a member of the pastoral staff shall not be accused unless there are two witnesses. (Mat 18:16, 1Ti 5:19-20) The steps outlined in sections (B) and (C) must be followed.
- E. The Discipline Committee shall hear a matter if the steps outlined in sections (B), (C), and (D) have been taken to seek confirmation, repentance, and restoration. No matter may be heard by the Discipline Committee or the church unless the steps outlined in sections (B), (C), and (D), have been taken, except in the case of a public offense.
- F. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in sections (B), (C), (D), and (E) have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church upon a majority vote of the membership present at a meeting called for the purpose of considering disciplinary action.
- G. If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the church membership, all contact with him from that point forward must be for the sake of restoration (except family members).

5. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP: Members, not under the disciplining process of Number 4, may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church.

#### 6. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP:

- A. The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months. (Members deployed overseas shall be exempt from this provision.) Upon good cause being shown to the elders, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the elders. The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member states that he or she is actively involved in any conduct described in Article III 8e, 8g, or 8h, or files a lawsuit in violation of Article III 8d. A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written

statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.

- B. No member of this church may hold membership in another church. If any member unites in membership with another church, that person is automatically terminated from membership in this church.

## ***Article VI ~ Church Governance***

### **1. ELDERS**

#### **A. AUTHORITY**

The leadership of Berean Baptist Church is vested in its elders.

1. The elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. As a member of the Council of Elders, the Senior Pastor shall have specific duties as described in Article VI.2.A.
2. Limitation of Authority – the following actions require the approval of the elders and the approval of the church membership.
  - a. Approve new members
  - b. Ensure church discipline is being conducted
  - c. Approve new elders and deacons
  - d. Select the new Senior Pastor
  - e. Approve the annual budget
  - f. Sell or convey real property
  - g. Dissolve the church as provided in Article XII.3
  - h. Amend the Constitution or Bylaws

#### **B. COMPOSITION**

1. The composition of the Council of Elders shall be comprised of lay (volunteer) men and vocational (pastor or non-pastoral staff). The composition of such shall be that the “lay elders” always exceed the number of vocational elders by at least one.
2. Vocational elders are men who receive financial compensation from the church as they fulfill God’s call to the specific ministries of the church.
3. Lay elders are men recommended by the elders and approved by the church who serve voluntarily without financial support from the church.
4. The Senior Pastor shall be a member of the Council of Elders. He may not serve as the chairman of the council.

#### **C. RESPONSIBILITY**

Elders are servants of Christ and the church and should look upon their tasks as spiritual ministries for the Lord. As such, their duties require that they:

1. Oversee and shepherd the church by teaching and preaching biblical truth (Titus 1:9, 2Ti 4:2)
2. Seek to discern the will of God respecting vision, direction, long-range planning, ordaining, and conferring ministerial credentials. (Acts 11:30, 1Pe 5:1-3)
3. Oversee the admittance of new members into the congregation
4. Devote themselves to prayer for the congregation (Acts 6:4)
5. Model Christ-like behavior (1Ti 3:2)
6. Maintain doctrinal purity (Acts 20:29-30)
7. Attend to the spiritual, physical, material and social needs of the church
8. Develop future spiritual leaders (2Ti 2:2)
9. Lead the church in obedience to the Great Commission and promote missions (Mat 28:19-20)

10. Discipline unrepentant believers (Gal 6:1) and ensure church discipline is being conducted as necessary (Mat 18:15-18)

11. Pray for those who are ill (James 5:13-15)

#### D. QUALIFICATION

Each elder must be an active, male member of the church, in good standing and shall have a lifestyle that demonstrates a growing relationship with Christ. Each elder must possess mature judgment and unquestionable Christian character and demonstrate loyalty to the Word of God and devotion to the spiritual welfare of the church. Each elder's character shall reflect the requirements described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 as interpreted by the elders. Each elder shall faithfully attend the worship services of the church and faithfully lead and participate in the church's ministries and activities.

#### E. SELECTION, APPROVAL AND TENURE

1. Selection – Men are recommended by the Council of Elders and approved by vote of the church membership. Names for consideration may be submitted to the elders by church members.
2. Approval – Having met the qualifications as determined by the elders' review, potential elders shall be presented to the church members for vote of approval at any regular members' meeting. Each candidate must receive a two-thirds majority vote of the members present on the church property.
3. Tenure
  - a. With the exception of the Senior Pastor, whose position on the council is permanent, an elder shall serve a two (2) year term starting at the beginning of the next calendar year once approved by the congregation, as defined in these Bylaws and is eligible for nomination for two (2) additional, consecutive terms. An elder serving for three (3) consecutive terms must observe a sabbatical of at least one (1) year.
  - b. An elder is free to resign at any time and may be removed from his position by the Council of Elders if in the judgment of the remaining elders he has failed to continue to meet the qualifications as set forth in Article VI.E.4.
4. Discipline

When, in the judgment of two (2) or more elders, an elder has engaged in immoral conduct, improper financial practices or promotes theological beliefs or views counter to orthodoxy or the established positions of Berean Baptist Church, two (2) or more elders will bring the issue(s) to the attention of the Council of Elders. The council will investigate the matter and determine whether church discipline is appropriate. The elders will then administer discipline in accordance with biblical guidance and the Bylaws of Berean Baptist Church (Mat 18:15-20, Titus 3:9-11, 1Co 5:11, Gal 6:11).

#### F. ORGANIZATION

The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the church. The elders shall elect a chairman from among the lay elders annually who may serve consecutive terms. Elders shall meet regularly and when a meeting is held for the purpose of determining a specific course of action, a quorum consisting of at least half of the lay elders and half of the vocational elders must be present.

## 2. THE SENIOR PASTOR

### A. SENIOR PASTOR OFFICE: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Pastor is responsible to lead the church in accordance with biblical principles to accomplish the New Testament purposes of the church. As such, his duties require that he:

1. Preach the whole counsel of the Word of God to the members and attenders of Berean on the Lord's Day through a careful exegesis of the biblical text while drawing relevant application (Acts 20:27; 2Ti 4:2)

2. Teach the church right and sound doctrine, the comprehensive biblical narrative, and how to develop and possess a biblical worldview in the 21st century (2Ti 2:15, Titus 2:1)
3. Regularly proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and its application to all aspects of life (Mark 16:15)
4. Lead the church in obedience to the Great Commission (Mat 28:19-20)
5. Pray for the members of the church (Acts 6:4)
6. Oversee obedience to the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper (Mat 28:19-20, Luke 22:19)
7. Lead by example in the pursuit of personal holiness and the manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit (1Pe 1:15, Gal 5:22-23)
8. Serve as a member of the Council of Elders and regularly attend elders' meetings (1Ti 4:14)
9. Equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:12)
10. Develop and mentor the pastoral staff and those who are called and gifted to preach and teach the Word of God (Rom 12:7)
11. Regularly meet with the church staff to ensure the work of the Lord is being done by the church
12. Provide spiritual leadership and guidance to members of the church as needed
13. Serve as the chief administrator of the church staff and the day to day operations of the church and its ministries including the Academy
14. Shepherd the church to follow the Word of God (1Pe 5:2)
15. Oversee the admittance of new members into the congregation
16. Ensure church discipline is being conducted as necessary (Mat 18:15-18)
17. Oversee the ordination of pastors as needed (1Ti 5:22)
18. Visit the sick
19. Attend all members' meetings
20. Ensure the church operates within its fiscal budget in relation to the tithes and offerings the church receives
21. Promote fellowship among the members of the church to create the reality of being part of the household of God (Acts 2:42, Gal 6:10)
22. Oversee the manner in which the church worships in song glorifies God and is doctrinally sound
23. Interface with the deacons for the care of the widows and needy in the congregation (Acts 6:1-6, 1Ti 5:16)
24. Remain accountable to the elders in the manner of sound doctrine, exegesis of the biblical text, ethical and moral behavior, personal financial management and anything else that would potentially disqualify him from serving as an elder
25. Oversee the stewardship of the buildings, grounds, and property of Berean Baptist Church
26. Conduct weddings and premarital counseling as needed
27. Conduct funerals of church members when called upon by the family
28. Oversee the church's presence on the Internet and social media platforms
29. Oversee the church missionary program and regularly interface with those missionaries the church financially supports
30. Serve as the President of the Berean Baptist Church, Unaffiliated, Inc.

#### B. DISCIPLINE OF THE PASTOR

1. Criteria for Discipline of the Senior Pastor. Should, in the opinion of two (2) or more elders, the Senior Pastor engage in immoral conduct, improper financial practices, or espouse theological views or beliefs (hereinafter referred to as "pastoral misconduct") that may require discipline, then such persons shall contact the Senior Pastor and then, if necessary, the remainder of the elders and request that they undertake an investigation of all alleged incidents of pastoral misconduct and the evaluation of appropriate discipline, if warranted.

2. Process for Investigation and Disciplinary Action. Should the elders be called upon to investigate pastoral misconduct, an affirmative vote of a majority of the total number of elders will be required to initiate an investigation. Following the conclusion of the investigation and the making of findings, an affirmative vote of a majority of the total number of elders is required to take disciplinary action against the Senior Pastor. Following such majority vote, the elders shall assume complete authority over the Senior Pastor's ongoing and future ministerial activities; the elders may undertake to discipline the Senior Pastor in any way deemed necessary, including but not limited to removal of his position of leadership, termination of membership, and/or termination of his employment with the church.

#### C. INSTALLATION OF NEW SENIOR PASTOR

1. Vacancy while the Senior Pastor is in Good Standing. The Senior Pastor is in "*good standing*" if he is not under investigation or discipline by the elders. If a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor occurs due to death, disability, resignation or other absence while the Senior Pastor is in good standing (as defined herein), then the outgoing Senior Pastor shall nominate a candidate to serve as the new Senior Pastor by way of a signed writing (or in a previously signed writing in the event of death) submitted to the elders for their review and consideration. A two-thirds majority vote of the elders is necessary to confirm the nomination as a candidate. In the event that the elders do not confirm such nominee, the process shall be repeated until a nominee is confirmed by the elders as a candidate. If the outgoing Senior Pastor is unable or unwilling to nominate a candidate for the position of new Senior Pastor, then the elders shall nominate a candidate under the same process described herein.
2. Vacancy while the Senior Pastor is Not in Good Standing. The Senior Pastor is "*not in good standing*" if he is under investigation or discipline by the elders. If a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor occurs due to death, disability, resignation or other absence while the Senior Pastor is in not in good standing (as defined herein), then the elders shall nominate a candidate for the position of new Senior Pastor by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the total number of elders. In the event that the elders do not confirm such nominee, the process described herein shall be repeated until a nominee is confirmed as a candidate.
3. Appointment of Interim Senior Pastor. If a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor occurs due to death, disability, resignation or other absence while the Senior Pastor is not in good standing (as defined herein), then the elders may appoint, by a two-thirds majority vote, an acting Interim Senior Pastor who shall serve until such time as a new Senior Pastor is nominated and confirmed by way of the process set forth herein.
4. Once a nominee has been confirmed as a candidate for Senior Pastor, the candidate will be presented to the congregation and must receive a two-thirds majority vote of the members present on the church property.

#### 3. DEACONS

- A. The deacons are a group of men committed to serving the local body of Christ in areas that compliment and support the elders such that the elders can focus on prayer and ministry of the Word. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6.1-6 and 1Pe 5.1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.
- B. Deacons should meet the qualifications as set forth in Acts 6.3-7 and 1 Timothy 3.8-13.
- C. Deacons shall serve for a one (1) year term once approved by the congregation, as defined in these Bylaws and they are eligible to continue for two (2) additional, consecutive terms. A deacon serving for three (3) consecutive terms must observe a sabbatical of at least one (1) year. Deacons may be nominated for successive terms in the same manner following their sabbatical. There is no limit to the number of terms a deacon may serve. Although a deacon may start serving immediately once approved by the congregation, their term will be a minimum of twelve (12) months through the end of the calendar year following their twelfth month of service if they began serving in a month other than January. A deacon's first term will be considered as one term regardless of how many months are involved. The members of the church will

recommend deacons for each term to the Council of Elders. Upon approval of the elders, the chairman of the elders shall present nominations to the church in any members' meeting. A majority vote of the congregation will be required to elect any deacon. Any first term deacon will be confirmed by the laying on of hands by the elders.

- D. Deacons shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed.

### ***Article VII ~ Corporate Governance***

1. DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS: As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the Senior Pastor shall serve as President of the corporation; the Clerk shall serve as Secretary of the corporation; the Treasurer shall serve as Treasurer of the corporation.

2. THE PRESIDENT OF THE CORPORATION:

- A. Appointment to and Creation of New Offices. The President shall be appointed in accordance with requirements set forth under Article VI. The Secretary and Treasurer are to be nominated by the President and approved by a majority vote of the Trustees. In the event the Trustees should not approve the President's nomination for Secretary or Treasurer, other nominations must be made by the President until the candidate is approved by a majority vote of the Trustees. In the event that the President is unwilling or unable to nominate a Secretary or Treasurer, then the Trustees shall nominate a Secretary or Treasurer and approve such nominee by a majority vote of the Trustees.
- B. Term. The Senior Pastor shall be the President until he resigns or is removed in accordance with Article VI and a new Senior Pastor is installed in accordance with Article VI. The term of office for all officers other than Senior Pastor shall be one (1) year; however, such officers may serve consecutive terms without limitation upon a majority vote of the trustees at a duly called annual election. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Senior Pastor, the elders shall appoint an acting President.
- C. Resignation. An officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the church. Such resignation shall take effect on the date of the receipt of such notice, or at any later time specified therein; and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective. All other church officers may be removed with or without notice, and with or without cause, by a majority vote of the elders.

3. POWERS OF OFFICERS

- A. PRESIDENT: The duties and responsibilities of the President are to nominate officers who must then be approved by a majority vote of the elders; and to endeavor to ensure that all official and duly authorized directives and corporate resolutions are properly carried out.
- B. TREASURER: The Treasurer shall work in conjunction with the financial staff of the church to ensure that the business of the church is done decently and in order. They shall serve as the treasurer of the corporation. They shall have access to the financial records and shall review receipts and reports as they deem appropriate. In conjunction with the financial staff, they shall ensure that the following guidelines are followed:
  - 1. Deposit all funds in the name of the church in banks, trust companies, or other depositories, as shall be selected by the President or Treasurer;
  - 2. Receive and give receipt for all contributions, gifts, and donations to the church;
  - 3. Disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the church as may be directed by the President, the deacons, or the budget adopted by the members of the church at the annual members' meeting, taking proper vouchers for the disbursements;
  - 4. Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the church's properties and business transactions including account of its assets, liabilities, receipts, and disbursements;
  - 5. Make all expenditures of the church (except miscellaneous petty cash disbursements) by check, ACH,

electronic debit, or other similar means as technology allows;

6. When and as requested, render to the President accounts of all transactions regarding the financial condition of the church;
  7. Present a financial report reflecting the financial status of the church at the regular quarterly members' meetings and make a general report for the year at the annual church administration meeting;
  8. Keep all church financial records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.
- C. **THE CHURCH CLERK (SECRETARY OF THE CORPORATION):** The Clerk shall work in conjunction with the administrative staff of the church to ensure that the business of the church is done decently and in order. They shall serve as the secretary of the corporation. In conjunction with the administrative staff, they shall ensure that the following guidelines are followed:
1. Certify and keep at the office of the church, the original Constitution or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the Constitution;
  2. Sign, certify or attest documents as may be required by law;
  3. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. (In case of the absence or disability of the Clerk, or their refusal to neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the President.)
  4. Maintain the records of the church, including membership roll, baptisms, and certificates of ordination, licenses and commissions;
  5. See that the reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed;
  6. Exhibit at all reasonable times to proper persons on terms provided by the law the Bylaws and minutes of the members' meetings;
  7. Keep an account of any special events in the life of the church which are of historical interest and give a report at the annual members' meeting of the status of the church membership roll in the past year;
  8. Keep all records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.
- D. **TRUSTEES:** The Trustees shall exercise only the following specific powers:
1. To oversee the purchase, lease, or acquisition of real and personal property on behalf of the corporation, and to accept real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest.
  2. To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of; to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the Church/Corporation if it is valued in excess of \$1,000; to oversee the borrowing of money and incurring indebtedness for the purpose and the use of the Church/Corporation; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the Church/Corporation, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to approve corporate signers for the repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges.
  3. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the Church/Corporation, if such action is mandated by a vote of the Church membership.

4. **DUTIES OF OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION:** The officers of the corporation shall discharge their duties, in good faith, with ordinary care, and in a manner they reasonably believe to be in the best interest of the church. The officers of the corporation may in good faith rely on information, opinions, reports, or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, concerning the church or another person that were prepared or presented by a variety of persons, including Trustees, officers, employees of the church, professional advisors or experts such as accountants or legal counsel. An officer of the corporation is not relying in good faith if the individual has knowledge concerning a matter in question that renders such reliance unwarranted.

### ***Article VIII ~ Meetings***

1. MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP: Unless otherwise determined by the elders, the church shall meet each Sunday for public worship both morning and evening and at least once during the week for Bible study and prayer.

#### 2. MEETINGS FOR CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

- A. A quarterly members meeting will be held following the service on the third Sunday night in January, April, July and October. A quorum shall consist of the members present. Members' meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer for divine guidance and blessing. The elders will appoint a moderator for each meeting who will determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling. For any meeting under this Article, the moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. The moderator shall have full authority to order the removal of all children (ages to be determined by the moderator) if the moderator determines, in his sole discretion, that circumstances so warrant. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, the moderator may, in his sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises in accordance with Article V.3 and treat the person as a trespasser.
- B. Voting by secret ballot may be used for an item under consideration if requested by any member of the church. In such a case, the moderator will appoint as many tellers as are necessary to count the ballots and make a written report to the Clerk as soon as possible during the meeting.
- C. Unless otherwise stated in these bylaws, all motions will pass with a simple majority vote of the members present on the church property.

#### 3. SPECIAL MEETINGS

- A. The elders may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting to elect a new Senior Pastor may be called by the elders at any regular meeting of the church at least two weeks in advance.
- B. Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and revivals may be held as the elders deem beneficial.

4. FISCAL YEAR: The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

### ***Article IX ~ Ministry of Education***

The church believes that its purpose is to provide the members' children with an education which is based upon and consistent with biblical teachings. The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To this end, the church shall engage in ministries in education in keeping with the following dictates:

1. CHURCH PARTICIPATION: All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the Pastor may permit non-church members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if he deems it in the best interest of the church. Tuition and other fees will be charged for Academy and Preschool participation.



2. **STAFF MEMBERSHIP:** The Academy's administration team shall be members of this church. Unless approved by the Senior Pastor, all teachers shall be members of this church. This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers, engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or other special meetings on a temporary basis.

3. **ARTICLES OF FAITH ACCORD:** All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the Articles of Faith of the church. All staff and faculty must sign affirming the Articles of Faith before being employed.

4. **UNITY:** All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church.

5. **TEACHING:** All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God. Any assertion or belief that conflicts with or questions the Bible will be disclaimed as false. It is the responsibility of every instructor or teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom.

6. **CHRISTIAN WALK:** All administrators, faculty and staff shall continue or adopt a life-style consistent with the precepts which they teach, whether in or out of the classroom.

### ***Article X ~ Expenditures***

1. **BUDGET:** The Treasurer must present the proposed budget for each year to the congregation. The annual budget for the upcoming year must then be approved by a majority of the members present at a members' meeting before the new year.

2. **ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES:** Any expenditure above \$2,500.00, and not a part of the regular annual budget, must be approved by the Treasurer. A limit of 2% per fiscal year may be spent outside the regular annual budget without majority membership approval.

### ***Article XI ~ Ordination***

1. **ORDINATION QUALIFICATIONS:** Any member of this church or its mission churches who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 may be ordained as a vocational pastor of the gospel.

2. **ORDINATION PROCEDURES:**

A. Following a conference with the Senior Pastor, and upon his approval for ordination of the candidate, the Senior Pastor shall call a council to examine and pass on the qualification of the candidate. The ordination council shall consist of ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.

B. If the council finds the candidate worthy of the ordination, the ordination council may ordain the candidate on behalf of the church.

C. The Senior Pastor shall arrange for the ordination service.

### ***Article XII ~ Tax-Exempt Provisions***

1. PRIVATE INUREMENT: No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II.
2. POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT: No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.
3. DISSOLUTION: Upon the dissolution of the church, the Trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) or the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Trustees shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with the church's Articles of Faith.
4. RACIAL NONDISCRIMINATION: The church shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national and ethnic origin. While the church does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national and ethnic origin in its membership or employment policies, as a religious institution it reserves the right to deny membership or employment or to terminate the membership or employment of persons whose lifestyle, words, actions or otherwise do not align with the church's statement of faith, standard of conduct or other policies of this organization.

### ***Article XIII ~ Indemnification***

1. ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION: The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.
2. EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION: To the extent that a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.
3. LIMITATIONS OF INDEMNIFICATION: Any indemnification made under this Article may be made by the church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the pastor, elder, deacon, officer,

employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because they have met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Section 1 of this Article. The determination shall be made:

- A. By a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the pastor and elders who were not and are not parties to, or threatened with, the action, suit, or proceeding;
- B. If the described quorum is not obtainable, or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested elders so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or
- C. By a majority vote of the members of the church.

4. **TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION:** Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, of proceeding, as authorized by the elders in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

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

6. **INSURANCE:** The church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church against any liability asserted against them and incurred by them in that capacity, or arising out of their status in that capacity, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify them against liability under the provisions of this Article.

#### ***Article XIV ~ Binding Arbitration***

1. **SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION:** Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration on any matters which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bringing any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

2. **NOTICE OF ARBITRATION:** In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of or relating to these Bylaws or any other church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians. To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution. If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty (60) days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled by arbitration as described in Section 1, above, and such Procedures for Arbitration as are adopted pursuant to the following two sections.

3. **LIMITATIONS ON ARBITRATION DECISIONS:**

- A. Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline as outlined under Article V.4 were followed.

- B. Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the Senior Pastor or any church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Article V were followed.

4. ARBITRATION PROCEDURES: The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the elders.

### ***Article XV ~ Designated Contributions***

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. Majority membership approval must be given before funds designated for a specific purpose may be spent otherwise. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article II.

### ***Article XVI ~ Missions***

1. The elders, shall recommend missionaries to the congregation for support. The missionaries shall be screened carefully and prayerfully. Missionaries shall be doctrinally sound and actively reaching souls. The amount of support and duration of that support shall be under the authority of the Senior Pastor and elders after the missionary is approved by a majority vote of the congregation.
2. The church may support other churches, schools, and organizations in their efforts to reach their community. The same process shall be used as is used for missionaries.
3. The church may form mission churches to reach unique groups of people within our community. The members of those churches shall have the same responsibilities and privileges as any other member of Berean. The mission pastor shall instruct his congregation on the Articles of Faith, Covenant, and Constitution.

### ***Article XVII ~ Amendments***

This Constitution may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the members present and voting, at any regular church members' meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit thirty (30) days before the vote is taken. A three-fourths majority is required to add or change an Article of Faith.

## ADOPTION

This Constitution was adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the church on January 26, 2020. This Constitution supersedes any other constitutions of Berean Baptist Church, Fayetteville, NC.

January 26, 2020

Date

Original Signed

President: Pastor Sean Harris

January 26, 2020

Date

Original Signed

Secretary/Church Clerk: Daniel Wardlow

January 26, 2020

Date

Original Signed

Treasurer: Brian Bahrenfuss

In a members' meeting held May 23, 2021, more than three-quarters majority of the members present voted to amend Article III – Articles of Faith, subparagraph 8e.

In a members' meeting held March 27, 2022, a majority of the members present voted to amend Article VI – Church Governance, subparagraph 1.B.1.

## Our Covenant

As a bond of unity among us, Berean Baptist Church accepts for its members the following covenant:

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and upon our profession of our faith in Him, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we do now solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We fully realize that the strength to uphold this covenant comes from the grace of God our Father, the shed blood of God the Son, and the power of the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

We promise to actively pursue personal holiness; to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church's spiritual growth and unity; to faithfully abide by the doctrines and behaviors outlined in this church's Articles of Faith; and to give cheerfully of our time, talents, and finances for the support of this ministry and its missionaries.

We further promise to faithfully attend the church's worship services, to maintain personal spiritual disciplines; to teach our children the Word of God; to share the gospel with our relatives and acquaintances; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements; and to avoid all gossip. We promise that we will love and pray for each other and in times of distress help one another.

We promise to endeavor to obey the commandments of our Lord Jesus and to abstain from anything that would cause our fellow brother or sister in Christ to stumble or that will bring reproach to the name of Jesus Christ.

We further realize that if we should fail to live up to the promises we have made, our brothers and sisters in Christ will always strive for our reconciliation and spiritual restoration. However, if we partake in a sustained and unrepentant violation of an Article of Faith, we will be brought under church discipline in accordance with the Church Constitution.

We make this covenant with each other for the express purpose of glorifying God as the visible representation of the body of Christ.



Rev Date: 2022 April 19