

Constitution  
of  
Bethel  
Baptist Church  
Marquette, MI

Approved: January 20, 2002  
Revised September 7, 2008

# *Constitution of Bethel Baptist Church*

*829 Grove St. Marquette, MI*

*Approval Date: January 20, 2002*

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# NAME

The name of this organization shall be Bethel Baptist Church

## MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of Bethel Baptist Church is to honor God by making disciples who are developing dynamic relationships with God, with other believers, and with a hurting and unbelieving world. We pursue our mission by focusing on the priorities of worship, nurture, fellowship, service, and outreach, based on the Bible as the standard of truth.

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

### ***What We Believe***

- We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully and uniquely inspired and without error in the original manuscripts. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is our supreme source of truth for our belief system. It is also the final authority in faith and practice.<sup>i</sup>
- We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – each of whom equally possesses all the attributes of Deity and the characteristics of personality. We believe God is the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of the universe.<sup>ii</sup>
- We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of mankind; He hears and answers prayer; and He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.<sup>iii</sup>
- We believe in Jesus Christ, God's one and only eternal Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, who is both true God and true man. We believe in His sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe that He voluntarily atoned for the sins of all who trust in Him alone by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation. We believe Jesus rose from the dead in the same body and then ascended bodily into heaven where He sits at the right hand of God the Father. He is the only mediator between God and man, continually making intercession for His own. We believe in the visible, personal, and imminent return to earth of our King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>iv</sup>
- We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son. He is present in the world to reveal and glorify Christ and to make all people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit dwells within every believer in Christ from the moment He gives them spiritual birth. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Spirit desires to empower the Christian to live by faith, moment by moment, in His fullness and control. He thereby enables them to bear fruit, which glorifies God.<sup>v</sup>
- We believe that men and women were originally created in the spiritual image of God. They are the supreme objects of God's creation. Although all people have a tremendous potential for good, they are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called sin. This attitude separates them from God not only in physical death but also in spiritual death. We believe that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are guilty sinners in thought, word, and deed.<sup>vi</sup>

- We believe that salvation is a gift from God to us. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. We believe that God's only means of salvation from sin is by trusting in Jesus Christ as our substitute. His shed blood on the cross and resurrection provide the means for anyone to be saved from sin's death penalty. Eternal life begins the moment we receive Jesus Christ into our life by faith. This spiritual birth, by the Holy Spirit, makes each believer a child of God. We believe the Spirit Himself testifies with our spirits that we are children of God.<sup>vii</sup>
- We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Jesus Christ is the Head. It is composed of all men and women, living and dead, who have been joined to Him through saving faith. We believe the local church is a group of believers in Jesus Christ. We believe our primary task and purpose is to honor God by making disciples who are developing dynamic relationships with God, with other believers, and with a hurting and unbelieving world. We pursue our mission by focusing on the priorities of worship, nurture, fellowship, service, and outreach based on the Bible as the standard of truth. We believe God admonishes His people to assemble together regularly for worship, for participation in ordinances, for edification through the Scriptures, and for mutual encouragement.<sup>viii</sup>
- We believe that the members of the local church are mutually accountable to one another; therefore, in regards to holiness and doctrine, we strive to teach, admonish, exhort, and rebuke, as necessary, anyone who is living outside of God's will and plan as stated in the Scriptures. We believe that matters of discipline and correction are given to the members of Christ's Church and are to follow the pattern of Matthew 18:15-20. The oversight of these matters rests ultimately with the church leadership who has the discretion of asking for Biblical counsel or arbitration from outside of the church.<sup>ix</sup>
- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that the Holy Spirit baptizes all Christians when they are born again. We believe water baptism follows a profession of faith, and we practice believer's baptism by immersion, which best symbolizes our identity in Christ. We believe that the Lord's Supper is open to all true believers who are walking in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>x</sup>
- We believe that every human being can have a direct relationship with God and is ultimately responsible to God alone in all matters of faith, but is also responsible to the Church and its leadership. We believe that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any religious or political authority; therefore, the church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from each other's control or influence.<sup>xi</sup>
- We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with inter-denominational fellowships on a voluntary, independent basis.<sup>xii</sup>
- We believe that Jesus Christ will come again to the earth – personally, visibly and bodily – to complete history and the eternal plan of God and establish His kingdom. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous. We believe that at physical death the believer enters immediately into eternal, conscious fellowship with the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his body to everlasting glory and blessing. At physical death the unbeliever enters immediately into eternal, conscious separation from the Lord and awaits the resurrection of his body to everlasting judgment and condemnation.<sup>xiii</sup>
- In light of Christ's return, we believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God. This means that we are to love God and each other as stated in the two Great Commandments. We believe God's goal for each believer is full maturity in Christ. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ commanded all believers to proclaim the gospel throughout the world and to disciple men of every nation. The fulfillment of that Great Commission requires that all worldly and personal ambitions be subordinated to a total commitment to ***Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.***<sup>xiv</sup>

# **Membership Covenant of Bethel Baptist Church**

*Because I have trusted in Christ as my Savior and Lord, have publicly identified with Christ in baptism, and am in agreement with Bethel's statements, strategies, and structure, as detailed in this constitution, I commit myself, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to God and to each other as a part of membership in this local body of Christ to the following covenant:*

## **1. I WILL LOVE GOD AND LOVE OTHERS**

- ... By living a godly life and lifestyle.
- ... By acting in love toward others and doing what pleases God.
- ... By growing spiritually and sharing God's love with others.

"Jesus said, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. . .and Love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 22:37-39 "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love." Ephesians 5:1,2

"Have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart." 1 Peter 1:22b "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." Ephesians 4:29  
"Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living." 1 Thessalonians 4:1

## **2. I WILL DEMONSTRATE LOVE FOR MY FAMILY**

- ... By showing honor and respect to my parents, my family members and / or my children.
- ... By being loving, respectful, and mutually submissive to my marriage partner.
- ... By living a sexually moral life in mind and actions.

"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Ephesians 5:21 "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged." Colossians 3:18-21 (Ephesians 5:21-25) "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;" 1 Thessalonians 4:3 "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body." 1 Corinthians 6:18

## **3. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH**

- ... By praying for its growth, maturity and unity.
- ... By inviting the unchurched to attend and welcoming those who visit.
- ... By attending faithfully and giving generously.

"To the church...we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly... Pray continually.. " 1 Thessalonians 1:2;5:17

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together... but let us encourage one another." Hebrews 10:25

"Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers." Hebrews 13:1,2b

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:6,7

## **4. I WILL SERVE IN THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH**

- ... By making disciples and mentoring them.
- ... By being equipped by the pastors and teachers to serve with a whole heart.
- ... By discovering and using my gifts, talents, and abilities.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19, 20 "God gave. . . some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up. . ." Ephesians 4:11-12 "Each of you should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administrating God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10 "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ... a servant." Philippians 2:3,4,7

## **5. I WILL PROTECT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH**

- ... By reflecting Christ in all my actions to those inside and outside the family of God.
- ... By being conscious of the impact of all my behavior.
- ... By following those in leadership and submitting to their authority.

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus." Romans 15:5  
"Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31 "Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way." Romans 14:13 "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you." Hebrews 13:17

# CONFERENCE AFFILIATION

Bethel Baptist Church shall be affiliated with the Baptist General Conference nationally and with the Great Lakes Baptist Conference regionally.

## MEMBERSHIP

**Membership Qualifications and Procedure:** Church membership is a high priority at Bethel. All believers who desire to be part of the Bethel family are encouraged to join heart and hands in membership. At Bethel all members shall be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, baptized by immersion, agree with the Affirmation of Faith, and seek to live in agreement with the Membership Covenant. The procedure for becoming a member shall be to participate in the membership class, complete and submit a written membership application, and meet with two elders. The purpose of this meeting is to address any questions or concerns applicants may have about the church's policies, practices, strategies, or attitudes and for the elders to interview applicants regarding their story of faith, spiritual experience, and areas of interest in serving as a member. Following the interview, the congregation shall be given an opportunity to provide comments to the Elders about the applicant. Based on the candidate's application, interview and any comments received, the Board of Elders shall decide whether or not to grant membership to the applicant and inform the congregation of that decision. The names of new members will also be recorded at the next business meeting.

**Membership Status and Voting Privileges:** Active Members shall be the voting members of the church and shall constitute the Corporation. Associate membership status shall be granted to members who are not permanent residents of this area and may hold membership elsewhere or are under the age of 16. Associate Members are granted all membership privileges except the right to vote or hold an elected office. No member under 18 years of age shall be entitled to vote in matters relating to the transfer of title, sale, purchase, lease, or mortgages of real estate. The Board of Elders may take action to change an Active or Associate member's status to that of an Inactive member, ineligible to vote or hold elected office, because the member is no longer a resident of this area but desires to keep their membership here, has been absent from the services of the church for an extended period without giving satisfactory reason for such absence, or is under discipline of the church.

**Membership Accountability:** Members are accountable to both God and one another regarding their beliefs, conduct, and attitudes. Offenses between members shall be dealt with according to the spirit and principles of God's Word (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5; 6; Galatians 6:1-5; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; James 5:19-20). The goal is always reconciliation, forgiveness, restoration, and a spirit of repentance. When offenses between members are not resolved or there is a refusal to listen, the matter shall be brought to the Board of Elders. In such matters the Board of Elders shall be responsible for taking appropriate actions for the benefit of the church family. Such action may result in members being released from leadership or ministry responsibilities and membership privileges.

**Review of Membership:** The Board of Elders shall review at least annually the membership roll to determine if the status of any members should be changed for any reason. Prior to taking any action affecting a member's status the Board of Elders shall notify the member in writing, giving the member an opportunity to respond to the change.

**Withdrawal, Transfer, or Release from Membership:** Requests for withdrawal from membership or for a letter of transfer or certification to another church shall be authorized by the Board of Elders. Report of such action shall be made to the Active Members. Additionally, a member may be released from membership as a result of either a long-term status as an Inactive member or the refusal to give a satisfactory response to disciplinary action taken by the Board of Elders. Such action shall be recommended only after reasonable effort has been made for reconciliation and restoration of the member. A recommendation to release a member may be made to the Active Members by the Board of Elders. The member shall be notified of the

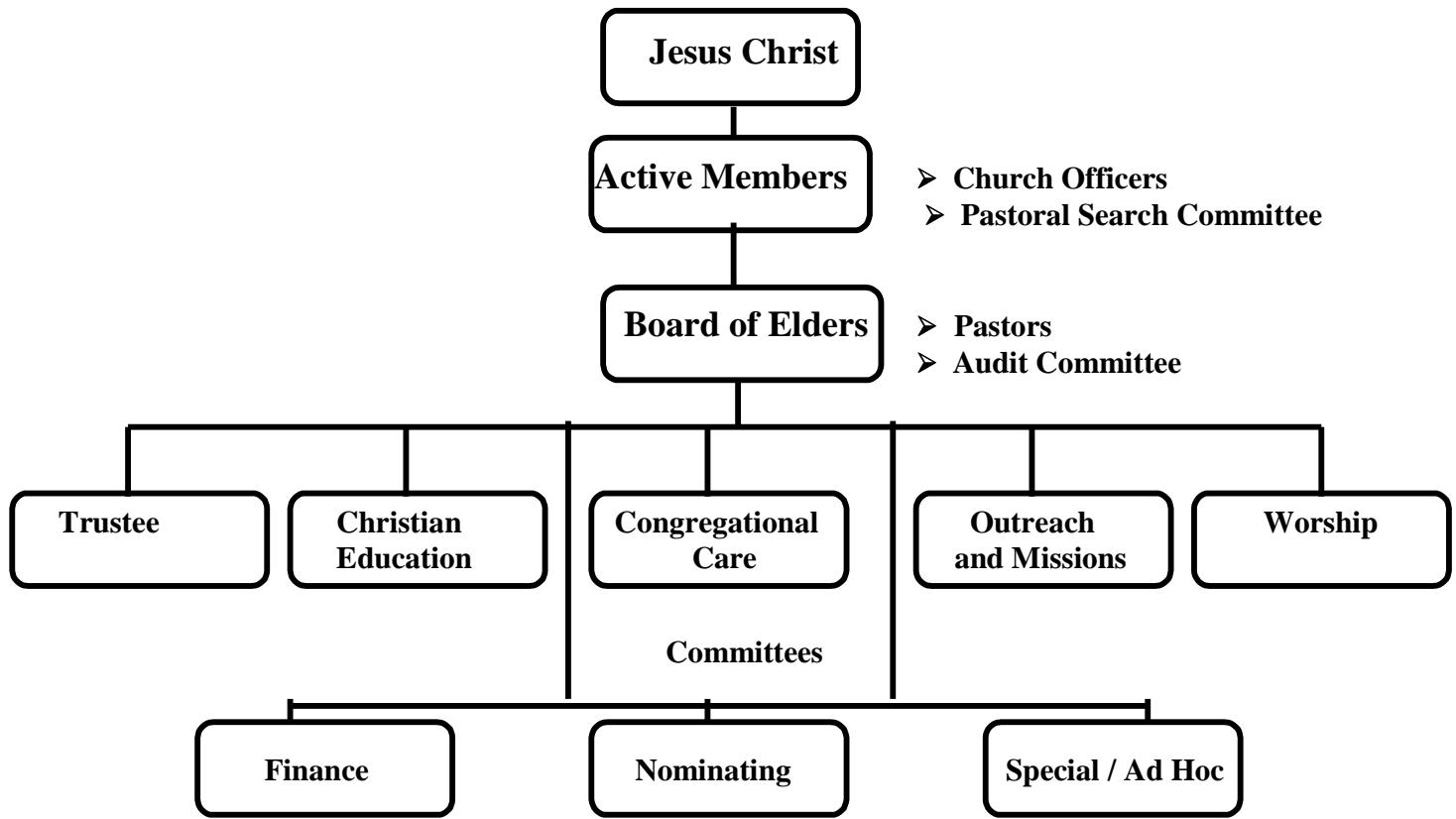
recommendation for his or her release and given opportunity to appear before the voting members to respond to the charge(s) brought against him or her. Voting on the question of releasing a member shall be done by written ballot, and passage shall require a seventy-five percent (75%) majority of the Active Members present at a properly called business meeting.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT

### AUTHORITY

Under the Headship of Christ, the ultimate human authority for the government of this church is vested in the Active Members and shall be executed through the Board of Elders, pastoral staff, ministry boards, committees, and other elected officers according to the provisions of this Constitution.

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



### OFFICERS

The officers of the church shall be:

- a. Church Chairman
- b. Vice Chairman
- c. The Board of Elders
- d. Clerk
- e. Assistant Clerk
- f. Treasurer
- g. Assistant Treasurer
- h. Financial Secretary
- i. Assistant Financial Secretary

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS AND LEADERS**

To hold an elected or appointed leadership position in this church a person must be an active member in good standing who demonstrates a commitment to the ministry of Bethel Baptist Church and displays both character and conduct consistent with Biblical standards as described in the Membership Covenant. All elected leaders shall be regular participants in public worship. Both women and men have active leadership roles in the ministry of Bethel Baptist Church, but we understand the Scriptures teach that those who serve in the position of an elder are to be men. Elders shall meet the additional qualifications of striving to meet the biblical standards for church leaders (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4), being a proportionate giver with tithing as a norm, and being actively involved in ministry at Bethel Baptist Church.

## **TERMS FOR ELECTED OFFICERS AND LEADERS**

All elected officers and ministry board leaders shall be elected by the Active Members at the Annual Meeting. Elected elders and leaders may serve two consecutive three-year terms with a required year off after the second term. All other terms for elected officers shall be one year or for such a term as may be provided for in the vote of the church when electing and appointing officers. No officer elected to serve for a one-year term shall serve more than three consecutive terms in the same capacity but may be elected to the same office after a lapse of one year. The above restrictions may be waived for a specific officer or elected leader by receiving an affirmative vote of seventy-five percent (75%). In case of the filling of a vacancy before the term is completed, the term shall be for the balance of the elective year. Officers and leaders shall assume responsibilities on the first day of the new church elective year.

## **THE BOARD OF ELDERS**

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the strategic direction of Bethel Baptist Church and shall have authority to manage the business affairs of it. This board is responsible to the membership to establish strategies and objectives to fulfill the church's purpose and to assure that the ministry operates consistently with them. They shall be leaders of the congregation in life, thought, and ministry. The Board of Elders shall normally meet monthly and at other times as necessary to accomplish its duties. It shall maintain permanent, typed minutes. The ministry profile of the Board of Elders shall include:

- a. General spiritual oversight and direction of the church, including developing and implementing annual and long-range goals and strategies.
- b. Overseeing the process for membership application, acceptance, and dismissal.
- c. Approving policy statements submitted by ministry boards and establishing policies, which are deemed appropriate and necessary for the effective function and operation of the church.
- d. Appointing a replacement for the balance of the elective year when a vacancy occurs on the Board of Elders, ministry boards, or committees.
- e. Overseeing and evaluating all paid pastoral and clerical staff.
- f. Overseeing all the finances of the church. Specific financial responsibilities may be delegated to the Finance Committee, which is accountable to the Board of Elders.
- g. Reviewing all matters of business to be presented at the church business meetings and establishing the agenda for such meetings.
- h. Setting the church schedule and calendar in concert with the ministry boards.
- i. Overseeing the administration of the ordinances of baptism and communion.
- j. Arranging for services of the church in the absence or indisposition of the Senior Pastor and making recommendation to the church for an interim pastor in the transition period between pastorates.
- k. Appointing ad hoc committees as necessary to carry out specific activities or tasks.

The Board of Elders has significant decision-making authority delegated to them by the Active Membership, but the following decisions shall be made by a vote of the Active Membership:

- a. The calling or releasing of a pastoral staff member.
- b. Final approval of the budget at the Annual Meeting.
- c. Final approval of a slate of officers at the Annual Meeting.
- d. Sale, disposition, and/or purchase of real property.
- e. Sale, disposition, and/or purchase of personal property over \$5,000.00 unless already approved in the annual budget.
- f. Disbursement of funds over \$5,000.00 for special ministry projects unless already approved in the annual budget.
- g. Final approval for income expansion ministries and projects.
- h. Constitutional changes.

The Board of Elders will designate an elder to serve as a representative to each of the ministry boards. In that capacity the representative elder shall be a voting member of, and shall serve as a liaison to, that ministry board. These elders could serve as the chairman of their respective boards but would not be expected to do so.

It is the recommendation of this Constitution that there be a minimum of one (1) elder for every twenty-five (25) Active Members. The Senior Pastor shall serve on the Board of Elders along with up to one (1) other member of the pastoral staff.

An elder may be released from office by:

- a. Withdrawal from membership.
- b. Voluntary resignation.
- c. Two-thirds majority vote of the remaining Board of Elders.
- d. By failing to receive the required annual confirmation vote of twenty-five percent (25%) of the members present at the Annual Meeting. If not confirmed, the individual will be required to step off the Board of Elders for at least one year.

## **MINISTRY BOARDS**

The ministry boards shall be the Trustee Board, the Congregational Care Board, the Christian Education Board, the Outreach and Missions Board, and the Worship Board. In addition to the designated elder each of the ministry boards shall consist of at least three elected members. Additional members shall be elected based on need and availability of qualified candidates. Terms of office should be staggered if possible. Each ministry board shall be responsible to designate their chairman and secretary annually and make other assignments within their boards as deemed necessary. At the first meeting of the new elective year each ministry board shall establish their annual meeting schedule, usually meeting monthly. Written minutes shall be kept of all meetings with copies being forwarded to the Board of Elders within ten days of each meeting. All recommendations to the Board of Elders or the Active Membership shall be first presented in written form to the Board of Elders.

A ministry profile shall be used as a guideline for each ministry board. Each board's ministry profile shall include their statement of purpose, strategies, responsibilities, leadership structure, and any qualifications for ministry. Each ministry board shall

- a. Annually review and update their ministry profile as needed and submit it to the Board of Elders for approval.
- b. Recruit and train ministry personnel as needed.
- c. Define and provide the necessary materials required for ministry.
- d. Annually submit to the Board of Elders/Finance Committee proposed budgets and objectives for the ensuing year.
- e. Work in harmony with all ministry boards in areas of overlapping responsibilities and mutual concerns.

The **Trustee Board** is entrusted with the priority ministry of managing and caring for the physical building(s), grounds, and property God has given to this congregation, including: regular and long term maintenance; needed repairs and improvements; appearance and comfort; and planning for future alterations, improvements, and additions.

The **Christian Education Board** is entrusted with the priority ministry of establishing, coordinating and executing discipleship, education, and training that will lead the congregation to spiritual maturity, including: Bible study and fellowship groups for children, youth, and adults; systematic discipling classes; childcare; Christian camping opportunities; retreats and seminars; and prayer groups.

The **Congregational Care Board** is entrusted with the priority ministry of providing spiritual fellowship and care for the congregation that results in assimilation and a sense of belonging, including: social activities; visitations; hospitality to newcomers and those in need; disbursing benevolent funds; providing pastoral care; and assisting with baptisms.

The **Outreach and Missions Board** is entrusted with the priority ministry of making our congregation one which shares the gospel of Jesus Christ through local evangelistic efforts and worldwide missions, including: training our people to share their faith effectively; planning outreach events; training the congregation to support worldwide missions; and planning short-term missions projects.

The **Worship Board** is entrusted with the priority ministry of encouraging and enabling our people to participate in relevant, corporate worship of God, including: prayerfully planning all worship celebrations with the pastoral staff; scheduling qualified personnel to assist; planning appropriate music; coordinating decorative, audio and visual enhancements and arranging communion services.

## **COMMITTEES**

The **Audit Committee** shall consist of three members to be elected by the active members at the Annual Meeting. This committee shall annually audit all financial accounts with written certification of their accuracy. Their written report shall be submitted to the Board of Elders and Active members and retained on file.

The **Finance Committee** shall consist of a member of each ministry board, the Church Chairman, the Senior Pastor, and the Treasurer; it is directly accountable to the Board of Elders. This committee is charged with the following responsibilities as delegated by the Board of Elders: drafting a proposed annual budget; at least quarterly reviewing the approved annual budget, the record of giving and expenditures, all designated and special funds, and making any appropriate recommendations to the Board of Elders; presenting written summary statements to the membership in the quarterly business meetings; properly investing all permanent and long term funds in interest bearing accounts; keeping a current list of all financial policies and communicating those policies with all financial officers.

The **Nominating Committee** shall consist of a member of each ministry board, an Elder, the Senior Pastor, and one member from the church at large appointed by the Board of Elders. Ordinarily, no person may serve more than three consecutive years as a member of the nominating committee. This committee shall present a printed ballot of all elected officers and leaders for the ensuing elective year to the Board of Elders. After their approval the printed ballot shall be posted two weeks prior to the annual meeting.

The **Pastoral Search Committee** shall be elected by the membership in the event of the resignation or releasing of the Senior Pastor or an Associate Pastor or the need to add an additional Associate Pastor. This committee shall consist of at least six members, at least 2 of whom are members of the Board of Elders. When seeking an Associate Pastor the Senior Pastor shall also serve as a member of this committee. The nominees for this committee shall be selected by the Nominating Committee and shall be presented to the church two weeks prior to the business meeting at which this committee is to be elected. The duties of this committee shall be to

develop a list of prospective candidates, check background, interview, evaluate, and select possible candidates for the position being sought; arrange for appropriate interviewing process, presentation to the congregation, and pulpit presentation; make a recommendation to the membership at a properly called business meeting; issue a call with a specific salary and benefits package approved by the Board of Elders; and handle all communications with candidates until a call is accepted, after which communications shall be made by the Board of Elders or Senior Pastor. It is suggested that only one candidate be considered at any given business meeting.

**Special or Ad Hoc committees** shall be appointed by the Board of Elders, as needed. Such appointments shall be reported to the membership at the next business meeting. When their purpose for serving is completed such committees shall be dissolved.

**Subsidiary organizations** to the church shall not be formed or permitted to serve unless its sponsors have previously submitted their plans and purposes to the Board of Elders for approval. Such organizations are required to confer with a designated pastoral staff member or a ministry board from time to time regarding their plans and activities, and all matters of importance that affect the church shall be submitted to the Board of Elders for approval.

## PASTORAL STAFF POSITIONS

### **Called Pastoral Staff**

Called pastoral staff shall include the Senior Pastor and other pastoral staff members as determined from time to time by the Board of Elders and the membership. Ministry profiles and titles for pastoral staff shall be determined by the Board of Elders and approved by the membership. Upon accepting the call to a pastoral staff position the pastor and spouse will automatically be Active Members until released from a pastoral staff position.

### **Seeking and Calling a Pastor**

In the event of a vacancy in the pastoral staff or the need to seek an additional pastor, the Pastoral Search Committee shall supply and recommend prospective candidates to be accepted or rejected by vote of the membership. A call to a candidate for a pastoral staff position shall issue from the membership upon the recommendation of the Pastoral Search Committee and a seventy-five percent (75%) affirmative written ballot vote of the Active Members present at a properly called business meeting.

### **Term of a Pastor**

Pastoral staff shall be called for an indefinite period of time.

### **Releasing a Pastor**

The issue of dissolving a pastoral relationship shall be considered by the membership due to one of the following: 1) presentation of the pastor's resignation; 2) recommendation of the Board of Elders; or 3) petition signed by at least twenty percent (20%) of the Active Membership and presented to the Board of Elders. Voting on the question of releasing a pastor shall be done by written ballot, and passage shall require a seventy-five percent (75%) majority of the Active Members present at a properly called business meeting. When either party contemplates the release of a pastor, the other party shall be entitled to a notice of not less than 30 days.

## DUTIES OF LEADERS

### **The Senior Pastor** shall

- a. Be the spiritual and administrative leader of the Bethel Baptist Church and shall have, along with the Board of Elders, the spiritual oversight of the church.
- b. Strive to equip believers for the work of the ministry by preaching and teaching the Word, leading public worship services, overseeing the administration of the ordinances, and leading

- c. the congregation in a practical Christian life.
- c. Be a member of the Board of Elders and an ex officio member of all ministry boards and committees and in such capacity shall strive to establish and accomplish objectives in conjunction with the strategies of Bethel Baptist Church.
- d. Direct the church staff, providing counsel, encouragement, and Christian discipline so as to assist in the accomplishment of objectives for each staff member. All pastoral and clerical staff are responsible to the Senior Pastor.
- e. Keep a current ministry profile which is annually reviewed, evaluated, and if necessary adjusted, in conference with the Board of Elders.

If the position of Senior Pastor is vacant or the Senior Pastor is unable to function, the Board of Elders shall appoint an interim senior pastor.

**Associate pastors shall**

- a. Carry out specific areas of ministry as described in their ministry profile under the direction of the Senior Pastor.
- b. Strive to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.
- c. Be an ex officio member of the ministry board(s) to which he is assigned.
- d. Report to the Senior Pastor regularly.
- e. Serve on the Board of Elders, if so approved.

The **Church Chairman** shall preside over all business meetings of the church and shall be a member of the Board of Elders. He shall be the president of the Corporation. In the absence of a Senior Pastor or Interim Senior Pastor, the Church Chairman shall assume that role.

The **Vice-Chairman** shall assume the duties of the Chairman in his absence, or when requested by the Chairman, and shall be a member of the Board of Elders.

The **Clerk** shall be the Secretary of the Corporation, keep an accurate written record of the proceedings of the church in its business meetings and shall make a copy of this record for inspection by the members of the church, notify members of their appointment to special duties, maintain official church records, and keep a record of all members showing date and manner of admission and dismissal.

The **Assistant Clerk** shall assume the duties of the Clerk in his/her absence.

The **Financial Secretary** shall keep an accurate account of all funds received and deposit same in the name of the church in a bank as directed by the Board of Elders, communicate the same to the Treasurer weekly , provide a monthly written report to the Board of Elders, and quarterly to the Active Members, and provide donors with envelopes and send annual statements to each contributor.

The **Assistant Financial Secretary** shall assume the duties of the Financial Secretary in his/her absence.

The **Treasurer** shall keep an accurate account of all funds by the Financial Secretary, make payment of all obligations incurred by the church, and present a written financial statement monthly to the Board of Elders and quarterly to the Active Members.

The **Assistant Treasurer** shall assume the duties of the Treasurer in his/her absence.

**Elders** shall be responsible to carry out assignments as directed by the Board of Elders and its Chairman including serving as an ex officio member of a ministry board or committee, carrying out duties in keeping with the office of Elder as described in this document, and serving Christ and His church as a servant/leader, one member of a leadership team ministering in humility and unity.

**Ministry Board members** shall be responsible to serve Christ and this church by faithfully striving to carry out the responsibilities assigned to their specific ministry board as found in this document and related ministry profile. Each ministry board member shall strive to serve Christ and His church as a servant/leader, one member of a leadership team ministering in humility and unity.

## **MEETINGS of the CHURCH**

### **WORSHIP**

Bethel Baptist Church is the people and place where God is experienced. Our public gatherings should be a memorable experience of worship. The church shall meet every Sunday for worship and may schedule other meetings as deemed necessary. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once a month. Baptisms will occur as necessary.

### **ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

The Annual Business meeting of the church shall be held during the month of January, as determined by the Board of Elders. In preparation for the meeting, the Board of Elders shall supply Active Members with a written agenda, reports from key ministries, an annual financial report(s), budget, pastoral reports, and a nominating slate of candidates at least ten (10) days prior to the annual meeting. The fiscal year of the church shall be from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>. The elective year of the church shall be from February 1<sup>st</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

### **REGULAR and SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Regular and Special business meetings, in addition to the Annual Business Meeting, may be convened by the Board of Elders as deemed necessary. Regular business meetings shall be convened quarterly. A special business meeting may be convened by written petition signed by at least five percent (5%) of all church members. Any and all business meeting(s) may be restricted in whole or in part to members as determined by the Board of Elders.

### **PROPER NOTICE**

Proper notice for all regular and special business meetings shall be 10 days, including two (2) Sundays. A published notice shall be posted on a designated bulletin board and in the church bulletin. Such notice shall include any special items for action. Proper notice of a meeting to amend this Constitution shall be thirty (30) days. If circumstances deem necessary to cancel or postpone any of the above meetings, the Board of Elders will be responsible for that decision. An attempt will be made to notify Active members. Postponed business meetings will be rescheduled within thirty (30) days.

### **PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES**

The parliamentary manual of authority in the conduct of business meetings, Board of Elder, and other committee meetings shall be a contemporary version of *Roberts Rules of Order*.

## **ANNUAL ELECTIONS**

At the annual business meeting, the Nominating Committee shall normally present at least one candidate for each elected position to be filled, for which there is no incumbent. All positions to be voted upon shall be contained on one ballot. When a single candidate is presented to fill a position, an affirmative vote of seventy-five percent (75%) is required for election. If two (2) or more candidates are presented for a position, the candidate receiving the most votes cast shall be elected.

## **VOTING**

Only Active Members are eligible to vote at business meetings and are strongly encouraged to be present. Absentee ballots shall be valid if received by the Church Chairman one hour prior to the meeting at which the vote shall occur. The Church Chairman shall determine the validity of absentee ballots and report at that meeting the names of those submitting ballots together with a ruling on the validity of each. Absentee ballots shall not be valid for the call or release of a pastor or release of a member. Unless otherwise provided in the Constitution, a majority vote of all present plus valid absentee ballots is required for transacting business by the congregation.

## **QUORUMS**

A quorum for conducting regular business shall be ten percent (10%) of all Active Members present except in the following:

- a. Call or release of a pastor.
- b. Release of a member.
- c. Change of affiliation.
- d. Consolidation with another church.
- e. Dissolving the church.
- f. Purchase or sale of real estate.
- g. Mortgage of real property.
- h. Amend the Constitution.

At such time the quorum shall consist of forty percent (40%) of the Active Members present and a written ballot will be required.

## **DISPOSITION OF CHURCH PROPERTY**

In case of an organic division of the church membership, the church property shall belong to those members who abide by this Constitution. Should differences of opinion arise, the Board of Overseers of the Great Lakes Baptist Conference shall make the final decision as to which members are abiding by this Constitution. Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church be advisable, the Board of Elders shall negotiate the plan for the disposition of the property of the church. The Active Members at a business meeting called for such purpose shall approve any sale, lease, transfer, or disposition of all or substantially all of the church property and assets. In case of dissolution of Bethel Baptist Church, the property and any debt shall be transferred to the Great Lakes Baptist Conference.

## **AMENDMENTS**

The Constitution of Bethel Baptist Church may be amended at any properly called business meeting, provided that written copies of the proposed amendment(s) are available and written and an oral announcement has been made to the Active Membership at least thirty (30) days prior to such meeting.

## References for Affirmation of Faith

<sup>i</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Psalm 119:105,160; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 1:1,2; Acts 3:18. 2 Timothy 2:15; Proverbs 30:5

<sup>ii</sup> Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, 3, 4:24; Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 2:13,18; Matthew 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:17; John 14:16,17; Colossians 1:15,19, 2:9; John 15:26; Hebrews 9:14; Jude 20,21.; Acts 5:3 4;Romans 1:20; Ephesians 4:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14

<sup>iii</sup> John 1:1-4; 1 Timothy 1:17; Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 12:29; Acts 5:30,31; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 7:25-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3; Revelations 20:4-6).

<sup>iv</sup> Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1-5, 14; 3:16; 10:24-30; 14:10-15; Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; Romans 1:3,4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Hebrews 4:14,15; 7:25-27; Matthew 20:28; Luke 19:10; Acts 1:11; 1 Timothy 6:14,15; Titus 2:13

<sup>v</sup> Matthew 28:19; John 1:32,33; Hebrews 9:14; Acts 1:8; John 14:16,17, 25-27; 16:7-14; Romans 8:5-17; 26-29; Ephesians 1:13,14 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16; 12:13; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 5:12; 15-18; John 15:8, 16

<sup>vi</sup> Genesis 1:26,27; 3:1-24; Psalm 8:3-6; Romans 3:9-18; 23, 25; 5:12-21; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3; James 2:10; 1 John 1:8-10; Psalm 32:1-5; Psalm 51:3-5; Isaiah 53:6; 59:1,2; Jeremiah 17:9

<sup>vii</sup> Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 3:16-21, 35,36; 14:6; Titus 3:5-7; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1; Romans 3:20, 23-26; John 1:12,13; Colossians 1:13, 14, 19-22; Romans 10:8-13; Ephesians 2:4-7; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Isaiah 53:4-6; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 2:2; John 3:1-8; Hebrews 9:22; 10:8-12; Romans 8:16

<sup>viii</sup> Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:37-47; Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12,20; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7; 9:6-8; Ephesians 1:22,23; Ephesians 4:3-12; Colossians 1:2,18, 25-29; 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; Titus 1:5-9; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 15:16; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; Hebrews 10:24, 25; John 4:23;

<sup>ix</sup> Galatians 6:1-5; Romans 14:19; Ephesians 5:21; Colossians 3:12-17; James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:8,9; 5:1-5; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; 4:1-5; Matthew 18:15-20; Hebrews 13:16-19. 1 Corinthians. 5:1-7

<sup>x</sup> Matthew 28:18-20; Corinthians 11:23-34; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 2:37-42; 8:35-40; 10:47; 18:8; Romans 6:3,4; Mark 1:9-11; John 3:22-23; Matthew 26:26-30; Luke 22:14-23;

<sup>xi</sup> John 14:6; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:9-17; 1 Timothy 2:2,5; Acts 4:19-22; Matthew 22:17-22; Matthew 18:15-35; Hebrews 4:14-16.

<sup>xii</sup> Acts 15:13-20; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, 16-24; Colossians 3:12-17, 4:12-16.

<sup>xiii</sup> Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-4; Luke 12:35-40; 17:26-30; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Isaiah 13:9-11; Daniel 12:1-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:3-51, 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Jude 14,15; Revelations 1:4-7; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:4-6; 11-15.

<sup>xiv</sup> Acts 1:6-11; 1 Corinthians 10:31,33; Matthew 22:37-39; 28:18-20; Romans 10:8-15, 12:1,2; 1 Corinthians 6:12,19,20; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Ephesians 4:1,13-15; 5:1,2; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:14,18; 1 John 2:15-17; 4:19.