

BYLAWS for West Meadows Baptist Church, Inc .

So that things may be done decently and in order in accordance with the accepted tenets of our faith and that we more readily help each other in our Christian service, we the members of this church declare, establish and adopt the following Bylaws to which we voluntarily submit ourselves to be governed.

ARTICLE 1 – NAME AND PURPOSE

SECTION 1.01 – NAME

This congregation of believers shall be known as the **West Meadows Baptist Church, Inc.** It is incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Florida. The church is and shall be understood to include all related, extension and auxiliary ministries.

SECTION 1.02 – GENERAL PURPOSE

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), for such purposes including, but not limited to, the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; the establishing and maintaining of religious worship; the educating of believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, both in Sunday and weekday schools by means of Christian education; licensing, ordaining, and/or commissioning men to the Gospel ministry; maintaining of missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country; and engaging in any other ministry the church may pursue from time to time, in obedience to the will of God.

ARTICLE 2 – STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

SECTION 2.01 -- STATEMENT OF FAITH

The following comprise the scriptural beliefs of this church and its members.

- (A) **The Holy Scriptures.** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God in its origin (the original manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic & Greek.) The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed, and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. Since English is a living language where word's meanings can change we believe it is important to use a translation which has proven to be accurate and trustworthy. One such translation is the King James Version. While it is the preferred version of the church in teaching and preaching, we recognize that there are also other good and accurate translations. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
- (B) **Dispensationalism.** We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life that define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations—the law, the church, and the kingdom—are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. (Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25, 27; Rev. 20:2-6)
- (C) **The Godhead.** We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, coequal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each have a distinct ministry in God's relation to His creation and people. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:10, 26)
- (D) **The Person and Work of Jesus Christ.**
1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8)
 2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5)
 3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2)

(E) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14)
2. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who indwells believers at the moment of salvation and assists them to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the responsibility of all Christians to maintain a Spirit-filled life. He further empowers, guides, teaches, sanctifies, and fills believers who daily surrender to Him. (Rom. 8:1; Eph. 1:13-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27)
3. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the church in order that they can do the work of the ministry. (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12)
4. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (1 Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22)

(F) The Total Depravity of Man. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19)

(G) Salvation (The New Birth). We believe that salvation (the new birth) is the free gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that in order to be saved, we must be born again; that the new birth is the new creation in Jesus Christ; that it is an instantaneous event and also begins the process of being changed into the image of Jesus Christ; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and thereby receives eternal life. This new birth is brought about wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel. Its proper evidence appears in the fruits of repentance and faith in newness of life. We believe that all sins, except blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, are forgivable. (John 1:12-13; John 3:3, 5; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; Gal. 5:22-25; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Matt. 12:31-32; Titus 3:5; 1 John 1:9)

(H) The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.

1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (Phil. 1:6; John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1; 38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:4-5)
2. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

(I) Prayer. We believe in the power and principle of prayer. It is our means of our communication with God, but unconfessed sin breaks the believer's fellowship with God and hinders answered prayer. Christ prayed often in public and private and taught His disciples to pray in His name and without ceasing. (Mark 11:24; Luke 22:40-46; I Thess. 5:17)

(J) The Church

1. We believe that the local church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again believers. We believe the true mission of the church is found in the "Great Commission" which instructs us first to make individual disciples; second to baptize these disciples; and third to teach and instruct as Christ commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order. (Matt. 28:19-20; I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27)
2. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11)
3. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control and any affiliations, societies, organizations, associations, or agencies this church affiliates with to further the objectives stated in the Purpose Statement are not authoritative in matters of church practice or belief. that Christ is the head of the church and superintends over the work of the local church through the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 1:19-23; Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; 1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)
4. We recognize water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age. We are opposed to modernism that emphasizes an unequal yoke with unbelievers' experience over Biblical truth. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 8:36-38; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; II Cor. 6:19)
5. We believe that New Testament baptism is the immersion in water of a born again believer in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit symbolizes the believer's faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, as it pictures our death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Matt. 28:19-20). Baptism by immersion is the door to church membership.
6. We believe the Lord's Supper should always be preceded by solemn self-examination and that the use of unleavened bread and non-fermented fruit of the vine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ until He returns (Matt. 26:26-29; I Cor. 11:30) The prerequisite to participation in the Lord's Supper are those laid down by Christ and His apostles as a church ordinance that include salvation, baptism by immersion, church membership, and an orderly walk. (II Cor. 11:27-30; Matt. 8:19-20; Acts 2:41, 47; I Cor. 11:18, 22) A disorderly walk is one contrary to the precepts of the gospel including immoral conduct, disobedience to the commands of Christ, heresy (teaching false doctrine) and promotion of division and/or dissent in the church.

- (K) **Separation.** We believe that believers should maintain a godly testimony and live in such a way that that their lives do not bring reproach upon their Savior. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations, and to refrain from all immodest and immoderate appearances, piercings, and bodily markings or cuttings. We stand against any and all worldly philosophies that seek to destroy or undermine the truth of Biblical Christianity. (Lev. 19:28; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11)
- (L) **The Second Coming of Christ.** We believe in that “blessed hope,” the personal, imminent return of Christ Who will rapture (catch up) His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom of 1000 years of righteous rule. (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; I Thess. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)
- (M) **The Eternal State.**
1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13)
 2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; I Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6)
 3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment. (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15)
- (N) **The Personality of Satan.** We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10)
- (O) **Creation.** We believe that the Genesis account of creation is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of God’s creation of the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin, or any other contrary belief.(Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)
- (P) **Civil Government.** We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions which are to be prayed for: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the government are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14; Acts 5:29; I Tim. 2:1-3)

(Q) Human Sexuality.

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one naturally born man and one naturally born woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery (cooperative cohabitation) and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery, appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)
2. We believe that the only Biblical marriage is the joining of one naturally born man and one naturally born woman for life. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

(R) Family Relationships

1. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are an heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:1-7)

(S) Divorce and Remarriage. We believe marriage was instituted by God to be a permanent union between one naturally born man and one naturally born woman. God clearly forbids and condemns same sex marriages. We believe that God also disapproves of divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon. (Genesis 2:24; Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)

(T) Abortion. We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

Euthanasia. We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil, regardless of the intention. 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.

Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment. (Ex. 20:13, 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28)

- (U) **Love.** 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. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18)
- (V) **Lawsuits Between Believers.** 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. 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. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)
- (W) **Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. 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. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20)
- (X) **Giving.** We believe God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support financially his local church. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of his tithe or offering once the gift has been made. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)
- (Y) **Music.** We believe music is a moral language given by God and governed by rules of composition and harmony. It employs sounds with varied durations, dynamics and timbre. Music strongly influences our character, thoughts, behavior, emotions and lifestyles. It has the power to change the way we see things as well as transform our senses and understanding. Therefore, we purpose to use only music that glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ and enhances the worship of Him. Our entire music ministry (including our congregational singing, special music/programs, choirs, and offertories) and those involved therein are a reflection of our purpose. Because our purpose dictates our practices, musical styles such as Christian contemporary, rock, or rap are neither Christian nor will be included in our worship. (Ps 100:2; Col 3:16, 23; Eph 5:10, 19; Heb 2:12)

SECTION 2.02 – AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith does 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 Statement of Faith accurately

represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore, is binding upon all members. All literature, whether print or electronic, used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.

SECTION 2.03 – COVENANT

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

We engage, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions and organizations of human origin; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the truth of God's Word; to seek the salvation of our families, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid backbiting, excessive anger, and all gossip or secretive meetings regarding personal issues of church members, church leadership or practice; to abstain from such worldly amusements as watching ungodly movies, gambling, rock music, and sensual dancing; to be free from all oath-bound secret societies and partnerships with unbelievers; to abstain from the abuse of drugs and the sale or use of pornography, intoxicating drink or tobacco in any form; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We also commit to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to demonstrate Christian sympathy and compassion and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the teachings of our Savior, and to secure reconciliation without delay.

We moreover engage, that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 3.01 – QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Those seeking membership must, through their actions, words, lifestyle and affiliations, evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

- (A) They must renounce sin and endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord.
- (B) Candidates for membership will be required to attend a 4 week pre-membership class

(Foundations Class) led by a member of the pastoral staff, in which they will study the Statement of Faith, the bylaws of this church, general church practices, and expectations of members.

- (C) At the conclusion of the class, the pastor may direct that candidates be interviewed by the pastoral staff and/or deacon body prior to being recommended for membership to ensure they fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith contained herein and agree to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders.
- (D) After such recommendation, membership will be granted upon a majority vote of the members present at any church service or meeting, and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:
 - (1) By profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and water baptism by immersion;
 - (2) By transfer of letter from another Baptist church;
 - (3) By statement of faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; or
 - (4) By baptism from another Christian denomination, having accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, but not scripturally baptized by immersion in a Baptist church;
 - (5) By restoration, if having been removed from membership, upon majority vote of the congregation after confession is made publically before the church membership of the sin or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance.

SECTION 3.02 – DUTIES OF A MEMBER

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to the covenant contained in Article 2, Section 2.03, each one further agrees to love, honor, and esteem the pastor; to pray for him; to recognize his authority in spiritual affairs of the church; to love the other members of the church; to faithfully support the church in attendance, prayer, tithes, offerings and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with Biblical commands, to support through a lifestyle walk affirming the beliefs and practices of the church, to serve according to spiritual giftedness, leading of the Holy Spirit, and recommendation of the pastoral staff.

SECTION 3.03 – PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- (A) Only members at least eighteen 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 may only exercise voting privileges in those areas are defined and limited by these by-laws. Minors who are members have voting privileges automatically at age eighteen.
- (B) This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the undershepherd with the support of the Shepherding Ministry Team. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and

procedures. The Shepherding Ministry Team shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of the church in addition to giving counsel and assistance to the pastor.

- (C) 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 pastor (or in his absence, the chairman or vice chairman of the deacons) has 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, in the discretion of the pastor (the chairman or vice-chairman of the deacons), be treated as a trespasser.
- (D) A member, upon five-business days, having made a prior written request made upon the church, may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church (the monthly treasurer's report), the minutes of the proceedings of church business meetings, and the minutes of the proceedings of Shepherding Ministry Team meetings.
1. A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church, or the accounting and financial records of the church.
 2. 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.

SECTION 3.04 – DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER

- (A) **Grounds:** Discipline is an exercise for which the church is responsible. The purpose of discipline is to promote repentance and restoration through exposing sinful behavior. It is redemptive in nature as well as corrective. Any member of this church is subject to discipline on the basis of unscriptural conduct or heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith. This section does not involve the discipling or dealing with the employees of the church regarding employment issues. The personnel manual of the church addresses those matters.(Matt. 16:19; 18:15-20; Luke 17:3; John 20:23; Acts 16:4; Eph. 5:11; I Tim. 5:19-20; II Tim. 4:2; Heb. 13:17; Rom. 16:17-18; I Cor. 5:1-13; II Cor. 2:1-11; Gal. 6:1; I Thes. 5:14; II Thes. 3:6, 10-15; Titus 3:10-11)
- (B) **Procedure:** All matters of church discipline are to be handled by the deacons and the pastor. These men shall have sole authority in determining unscriptural conduct, heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith, violations of the Church Covenant, and Bylaws as well as any amendment or other rules set forth by church leadership. If the pastor or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall temporarily step aside from his position of authority until the matter is resolved. The pastor and deacons shall be subject to the same disciplinary steps as other church members as defined in steps 1-4.
1. 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. He should also go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.

2. After step one has been followed, if reconciliation is not reached, the member seeking to resolve the matter is to submit a letter to the deacon body so that a deacon and/or his wife can accompany them in an effort to resolve the matter. No member of the church shall have the right to accuse any member of the church publicly. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
3. If the matter is still unresolved after the first two steps have been taken, the deacons shall meet with the pastor and designate a minimum of three deacons to accompany the pastor in personally meeting with the offending member and seek that member's restoration.
4. If the matter is still unresolved after steps one through three 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 the next scheduled business meeting.

SECTION 3.05 – TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Members, not under the disciplinary process of Section 3.04, may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church of like faith.

SECTION 3.06—AUTOMATIC TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- (A) The membership of any individual member shall automatically be deleted from the membership roll if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months. Upon good cause being shown to the pastor, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the pastor.
- (B) No member of this church may hold membership in another church. The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate if the member unites in membership with another church.
- (C) The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate if the deacons or pastor become aware of a member's open and unrepentant involvement in any sexual misconduct described in Section 2.01(P) or if a member files a lawsuit in violation of Section 2.01(V).
- (D) The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate if the member openly and unashamedly disagrees with any provision found in the Statement of Faith.
- (E) The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate if the member in a spirit of dissension actively engages in discussions and/or intentionally organized, meetings in a concerted effort to overthrow the pastor or present church leadership.
- (F) The membership of an individual will automatically terminate upon his or her death.
- (G) No provision contained in this section shall be subject to or governed by the procedures

regarding discipline of members set forth in Section 3.04.

- (H) 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 church membership.

SECTION 3.07-- AFFILIATED CO-LABORER

Those desiring fellowship, accountability and opportunities for service with this assembly on a temporary basis but who maintain active membership in a like body of believers outside this city, may be granted affiliated co-laborer status with this church. The affiliated co-laborer may be eligible to serve in certain capacities determined by the pastor and deacons, and may attend fellowship events granted for members. In no way, however, does this affiliation grant membership or the rights of membership to the individual(s) so granted. Affiliated co-laborers shall not be entitled to hold any office, vote in or have any say in any church matter, and shall not be counted for quorum purposes. A person wishing to become an affiliated co-laborer with this assembly must request so of the pastor, who will, in consultation with the deacons if necessary, decide if affiliated co-laborer status may be granted to the individual. If the pastor so determines, the person may be granted such upon a majority vote of the church membership at any public service or church administration meeting.

ARTICLE 4 – OFFICERS

SECTION 4.01 – CHURCH OFFICERS

The church officers are pastor (see Article 5, Section 5.02), deacon (see Article 5, Section 5.03), church clerk (see Article 5, Section 5.04), church treasurer (see Article 5, Section 5.05) and director (see Article 10, Section 10.02) (B-10). The pastor, from time to time as he deems appropriate, may appoint other church officers, subject to a confirmation vote of the church membership.

SECTION 4.02 – DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the chairman of the deacons shall serve as vice president of the corporation; the church clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation; the church treasurer shall serve as the treasurer of the corporation.

SECTION 4.03 – ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE

- (A) The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith. All church officers, upon request of the pastor, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith (as set forth in Article 2).
- (B) The church clerk, church treasurer, and director must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the pastor in order for them to commence or continue in their offices.

- (C) Only church members in good standing are eligible for election or appointment or reappointment to any church office or position. Affiliated co-laborers with this ministry are not eligible for such election or appointment.

SECTION 4.04 – TERMS OF OFFICE

- (A) The relationship between the pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The calling of a pastor or severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any regular or special called business meeting, provided notice to that effect shall have been given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior to the meeting. A 75% majority of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to call a pastor or to sever the relationship between the pastor and the church. A minimum of 30% of the eligible voting membership must be present to be considered a quorum for calling a pastor or severing the relationship between the pastor and the church. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates his membership. A restoration to membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements of Section 3.01(E).
- (B) The term of service for all offices and positions in the church, except the pastor and deacon, shall be one year, at the expiration of which they may be re-elected or re-appointed.
- (C) A vacancy occurring in any office or body, except in the case of the pastor, may be filled at any regular church business meeting.
- (D) All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed.
- (E) Members of the body of deacons may be removed from office for unbiblical conduct as determined by the pastor and other deacons, upon a majority vote of the remaining deacon body.

SECTION 4.05-- CALLING A PASTOR

Upon the resignation, death or dismissal of the Pastor, the church shall seek a candidate who subscribes to the Statement of Faith, the Covenant and bylaw provisions of this church, and whose life aligns with the qualifications of a pastor as described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The church shall abide by the following guidelines for calling a pastor:

- (A) The deacons shall select a pastor search team consisting of all active deacons and up to five other members elected by a simple majority of the deacons. The pastor search team shall interview potential candidates and will consider only men who completely subscribe to the Statement of Faith and Covenant contained herein;
- (B) Prior to being announced to the congregation as a formal candidate, any man being considered for pastoral candidate must preach at least one Sunday service. Thereafter, upon a majority vote of the deacons, the pulpit committee may formally announce the candidate to the church, after which the candidate must preach at least two regularly scheduled services and be available for a church-wide question/answer time prior to being voted upon by the congregation;

- (C) Notice from the pulpit must be given 2 consecutive Sundays prior to a formal candidate's preaching services, and 2 consecutive Sundays prior to the church congregational vote;

The candidate must be elected as Pastor by a majority vote of qualified, present voting members. The pulpit committee will only present for consideration to the church one candidate at a time, and an up or down vote must be cast prior to consideration of other potential candidates.

SECTION 4.06 – PASTORAL OVERSIGHT OF OFFICERS AND STAFF

- (A) Subject to the approval of the Shepherding Ministry Team and on the condition that they shall become a member of the church upon assuming their duties, the pastor may hire associates and assistants, church staff (paid or volunteer) to assist the pastor in carrying out his God-given responsibilities. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith and/or violates the policies and standards set forth in the Church Personnel Manual.

ARTICLE 5 – DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS

SECTION 5.01 – GENERAL DUTIES

- (A) **Specific Powers.** The church officers shall exercise the following specific powers:
 1. To purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church;
 2. To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church, to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and the use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges; and
 3. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church, if such action is mandated by a vote of the church membership.

SECTION 5.02 – THE PASTOR

- (A) **Responsibilities**
 1. The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. He shall administer the ordinances of the church, act as moderator at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters, supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch

over the spiritual interests of the membership.

2. The pastor shall oversee the various ministry teams. He shall serve as the team leader of the Shepherding Ministry Team. He shall inform all newly elected and/or appointed officers of the particular function and the responsibilities of their respective offices. He shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and perform such other duties as generally appertain to such a position. The pastor shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry that God has given him.
3. All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof including time and place and the use of the property belonging to the church for purposes other than the stated appointments shall be under the control of the pastor.
4. The pastor shall be responsible to fill the pulpit for each regularly scheduled church service as well as any special services. In the event of his absence, he (or the chairman of the deacon board in the case of a vacancy in the office of pastor or where the pastor is ill and unable to perform his duties) shall be responsible to invite speakers from within the membership or outside the church to preach in a manner consistent with the beliefs articulated in the Statement of Faith.
5. The pastor shall be responsible, in coordination with the deacons, to establish mandatory safety and security procedures for all ministries and programs involving minors.

(B) Qualifications

If the office of pastor becomes vacant, prospective candidates who meet the qualifications found in Scripture and outlined in the Church Operations Manual(I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), agree with the church's Statement of Faith and Doctrine may be contacted one at a time to set up an interview with the pastor search team and to be heard by the congregation. (See Article 10.03)

(C) Selection

In selecting a pastor, the Pastor Search Team shall consist of the all the active deacons and five other members elected by a simple majority of the deacons. The Pastor Search Team will be considered a special team and shall secure names and qualifications of potential candidates for the pastorate. After hearing the candidate preach and after the Pastor Search Team has lovingly questioned him thoroughly, it may call a special church business meeting for the purpose of voting on the candidate in question according to the procedures set forth in Section 4.04 (A)

(D) Removal of Office

The removal of the pastor for apostasy (divergence from the doctrinal statement) or for immoral or unethical practices shall be made only after due examination by the deacons according to the procedures set forth in Section 3.01 (E), Section 3.04 (A & B), and Section 4.04 (A).

(E) Resignation

In the event the pastor should resign, the resignation will become effective when mutually agreed upon by the deacons and the pastor.

SECTION 5.03 – DEACONS

(A) Qualifications

All prospective candidates for the office of deacon shall meet the qualifications found in I Tim. 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. All prospective candidates must be in agreement with the Statement of Faith, doctrinal position of the church and Bylaws. Although scripture does not specify a minimum age, it does say deacons are to be the husband of one wife and to rule his children and house well. Therefore, the church requires deacons to be married or widowed and have obtained 21 years of age before they may be nominated by the church to the office of deacon. They must also have been active members of the church at least 12 months. The number of deacons will be determined by the pastor and deacons.

(B) Election

As needed each year church members shall nominate men whom they believe are qualified to serve as deacons, and submit these nominations to the pastor and/or deacon chairman. Upon receiving the nominations the deacon body and pastor shall review the names, reviewing the Scriptural eligibility of each nominee. After the review is completed all qualified nominees shall be mailed a letter and questionnaire from the pastor asking them to complete the questionnaire and submit it back to either the pastor or chairman of the deacons. In the event the questionnaires are not returned, it will be assumed the nominee does not wish to be considered for the office of deacon at that time.

The questionnaires will be carefully and prayerfully reviewed by the deacons and pastor. On the basis of the questionnaires, personal interviews may be conducted by the deacons and the pastor. The names of those men eligible for the office of deacon as determined by the pastor and deacons will be placed on a deacon election ballot, and the deacon election will be held by a secret vote of the eligible church members at the next regularly scheduled business meeting. Those men receiving a two-thirds vote of the eligible members present will be accepted as deacons.

(C) Term of Office

The term of office of a deacon shall be a permanent one. In case of death, removal or incapacity to serve, the church may or may not elect a deacon to fill his vacancy. There shall be no obligation to elect as a deacon any brother who comes from another church in which he has previously served as a deacon.

Upon the active deacon body reaching more than seven in number, one or more of the deacons may rotate to an inactive status.

In the event there are more nominations and/or inactive deacons needed, the pastor and the body of active deacons will determine who will serve.

(D) Meetings

The deacons shall meet regularly (usually once a month). At this meeting they will report on the spiritual welfare of their flocks, give recommendations, consider upcoming events and discuss

any new matters with the pastor so that proper action can be taken so the general welfare of the church may be preserved.

(E) Responsibilities

The deacon body shall assist the pastor, in such manner, as he shall request, in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the religious services, and in performing all other work of the church. They shall make provision for the observance of the ordinances of the church. They shall assist the pastor in visitation and all other evangelistic efforts of the church. The deacon body shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries as requested by the pastor. They shall work with the pastor search team and/or provide the pulpit supply and choose a moderator for church meetings the office of pastor is vacant. Upon the death, resignation, or dismissal of the pastor, the deacons will appoint a pastor search team consisting of all active deacons and up to five other members elected by simple majority of the active deacons. (Section 4.05 A)

(F) Deacon Positions

The month following the annual commitment Sunday, the elected body of deacons shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a chairman who shall chair the body of deacons for one year, as well as a vice chairman, a secretary, and a chaplain.

(G) Resignation/Removal

In the event that any deacon should resign, the resignation shall take effect as submitted with a written acknowledgment by the pastor. Any deacon may resign his position at any time by giving written notice of his resignation to the pastor or chairman of the deacons if the office of pastor is vacant. The removal of a deacon for neglecting his duties and responsibilities or apostasy (divergence from the doctrinal statement) or for immoral or unethical practices shall be made only after due examination by the deacons and according to the procedures set forth in Section 3.04 (A & B).

SECTION 5.04 – CHURCH CLERK

The church clerk shall:

- (A)** Certify and keep at the office of the church, the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws.
- (B)** Keep at the place where the bylaws or a copy are kept a record of the proceedings of meetings of the shepherding ministry team, with the time and place of holding, the notice of meeting given, the names of these present at the meetings.
- (C)** Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law.
- (D)** See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. In case of the absence or disability of the clerk, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the pastor and/or deacons.

- (E) Be custodian of the records of the church, including the membership roll, baptisms, and certificates of ordination, licenses and commissions and give a report at the regular business meetings of the status of church membership.
- (F) See that the reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.
- (G) Exhibit at all reasonable times to proper persons on terms provided by law the bylaws and minutes of proceedings of the shepherding ministry team or the minutes of the business meetings of the church.
- (H) Keep an account of any special events in the life of the church, which are of historical interest.
- (I) Keep copies of all records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.
- (J) Serve as the secretary of the corporation and be a member in good standing.

SECTION 5.05 – TREASURER

The treasurer shall:

- (A) Keep in the church office an accurate and permanent record of all financial transactions of church funds. Make reports of itemized disbursements and the financial condition of the church as requested by pastor and SMT, at the monthly SMT meetings; deliver such records to successor upon leaving office;
- (B) Write, sign, record, and mail checks in payment of church bills and routine expenses approved by the pastor and/or deacons as well as disburse funds and salaries as directed by the church.
- (C) Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the church's properties and business transactions including account of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, and capital.
- (D) When and as requested, render to the Shepherding Ministry Team accounts of all his transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.
- (E) Present a written report of itemized disbursements at the regular monthly business meeting.
- (F) Assist the Shepherding Ministry Team in evaluating, planning, and developing the annual church budget.
- (H) Serve as the treasurer of the corporation and be a member in good standing.

SECTION 5.06 – ASSISTANT PASTORS

Under the direction and guidance of the pastor, the assistant pastors of the church shall assist the pastor in carrying out the ministries of the church. All assistant pastors must subscribe to the statement of faith and church covenant and be members in good standing.

SECTION 5.07 – DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS

- (A) All records are the property of the church and must be kept in the church office.
- (B) Any officer who neglects his duties as outlined in the bylaws for a period of three months may be removed from his office at the discretion of the Shepherding Ministry Team and another may be appointed by them to serve the unexpired term.

ARTICLE 6 – MEETINGS

SECTION 6.01 – MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Unless otherwise determined by the Shepherding Ministry Team, 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.

SECTION 6.02 – BUSINESS MEETINGS

- (A) **Time.** The regular church business meeting shall be held on the first Wednesday after the first Sunday of each month, unless announced otherwise, at which time the regular church business and recommendations of the Shepherding Ministry Team and/or deacons shall be considered. The regular business meeting in January shall be considered the annual business meeting since it closes out the calendar year. A quorum shall consist of the members present.
- (B) **Order.** All church business meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer for divine guidance and blessing. The following order shall be observed at regular church business meetings.
 - 1. Prayer
 - 2. Reading of minutes by members
 - 3. Corrections and/or additions noted
 - 4. Reports submitted
 - 5. Recommendations/New Matters
 - 6. Adjournment
 - 7. Benediction
- (C) **Moderator.** The pastor shall act as moderator at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters. If the church is without a pastor, the chairman or vice-chairman of the deacons shall serve as moderator. The moderator has the authority to request that any person leave the room at any time, particularly children.
- (D) **Voting.** Voting may be cast orally, by show of hands or secret ballot. The moderator will govern the method used. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting.

SECTION 6.03 – SPECIAL MEETINGS

- (A) **Special Meetings.** The pastor (or chairman of the deacons if the office of pastor is vacant or the pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action) 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 service prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or the severance of the relationship between the church and pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of Section 4.04(A).
- (B) **Church Meetings.** Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and revivals may be held as the pastor deems beneficial.

SECTION 6.04—MOTIONS

Members who desire that a certain motion be made or subject matter be discussed during a regular, or special business meeting must file a written recommendation with the pastor and deacons four days prior to the regularly scheduled monthly business meeting. The church leadership will then consider the proposal and proceed according to their conscience and what they understand to be in the best interests of the church. All other motions will be presented by the pastor and/or chairman of the body of deacons (or other moderator if the office of pastor is vacant) unless the pastor and/or deacons has delegated authority to another member and/or officer to raise certain motions.

SECTION 6.05 – FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.

ARTICLE 7 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

SECTION 7.1 – PURPOSE

The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To help fulfill this responsibility of imparting biblical truth and furthering the Great Commission, this church shall establish and maintain an educational program (Sunday School or Christian day school) for the purpose of winning souls to Christ, and teaching Bible doctrine, godly worship, and biblical Christian living.

SECTION 7.2 – 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 church may permit non-church members to participate and enroll their children in the church's educational programs or courses of instruction if they deem it in the best interest of the church.

SECTION 7.3 – STAFF MEMBERSHIP

All instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be members of this church. This provision may not apply to independent contractors such as janitors, contractors, visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or other special meetings on a temporary basis. All personnel (paid or volunteer) must subscribe to in writing the youth and child care policies of the church (Appendix B) before they may work in any youth or children's ministry. Because these policies are updated annually all personnel are required to keep their training current in order to work in any children or youth ministry area of the church.

SECTION 7.4 – AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENT OF FAITH

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the Statement of Faith of the church. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs that fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith or who adopts or lives a lifestyle inconsistent with the beliefs and practices of the Statement of Faith of this church, whether in or out of the classroom.

SECTION 7.5 – UNITY

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

SECTION 7.6 – 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, which conflicts with or questions a Bible truth is a pagan deception and distortion of the truth, which 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.

SECTION 7.7 – LITERATURE

All literature, printed or electronic, used in the church and its related and affiliated educational ministries must be approved by the pastor and shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith, and policies of the church.

SECTION 7.8 – CHRISTIAN WALK

All administrators, instructors, and teachers, and other staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall continue or adopt and maintain a lifestyle consistent with the precepts taught by the church, whether in or out of the classroom. All staff shall be under the supervision of the pastor who has authority to hire, appoint, or

dismiss the same as stated herein. In addition, every person who works with children and/or youth in the church ministry, whether paid or volunteer, must agree and adhere to in writing with the Statement of Faith and the church Personnel Manual.

SECTION 7.9 – THE ACADEMY HEIRARCHY OF AUTHORITY

- (A) The Academy Ministry Team Leader (who is the Academy Principal) oversees all matters relating to the Academy ministry.

The Academy Ministry team members must meet the requirements set forth in Article 7.3 on the condition that they shall become a member of the church upon assuming duties, the pastor may hire administrators, teachers and support staff to assist him in carrying out the ministry of education.

- (B) The Academy Ministry Team Leader (Academy Principal) shall assist and advise the pastor on all matters relating to the Academy ministry. The Shepherding Ministry Team shall hear all matters and disputes, which may arise out of the Academy ministry and shall advise the Academy Ministry Team Leader and the pastor accordingly. The Academy Ministry Team Leader may create and recommend to the pastor school policies for governing the Academy ministry consistent with the provisions herein.

SECTION 7.10 – ACADEMY CONDUCT

The Academy Ministry Team shall maintain a Parent/Student handbook which shall set forth the specific standards, beliefs, responsibilities for conduct and behavior which shall govern all parents/guardians, students, and guests involved in the Academy Ministry.

ARTICLE 8 – ORDINATION

SECTION 8.01 – ORDINATION QUALIFICATIONS

- (A) Any male member who meets the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6- 9, may be considered for ordination as a minister of the Gospel. Candidates for ordination must be members of this local assembly or one of its mission churches. No other persons may be ordained by this church.
- (B) The candidate must have an experience of conversion, a divine call to the ministry, a consistent Christian walk, a vital concern for the souls of men and for the edification of the church at home and abroad.
- (C) The candidate must affirm his unequivocal adherence to the Statement of Faith set forth in Article 2 of these bylaws. His doctrinal position on matters not specifically addressed in the Statement of Faith must be based on the Scriptures as the Word of God.
- (D) Graduation from a four-year Bible college, or its equivalent, is recommended but not required. Any uncertainty as to call or other obvious disqualifications should bar a man from ordination

regardless of educational attainments.

- (E) All persons licensed and/or ordained by this church must be convinced Baptists who accept the historic Baptist distinctives in all matters pertaining to church order and practice. A certificate of ordination enables him to perform the nine (9) sacerdotal functions such as conducting worship services, preaching/teaching, baptisms, weddings, funerals, baby dedications, giving spiritual guidance, and administrate church affairs as an ordained minister of the Gospel.

SECTION 8.02 – ORDINATION PROCEDURE

- (A) **Examination.** Upon a conference with the deacons and pastor, a meeting shall be called to examine the candidate's moral character and doctrinal beliefs. The ordination council shall consist of the church's deacons, and ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate.
- (B) **Recommendation.** If the candidate is found qualified by the ordination council they shall recommend to the church that they proceed with the ordination.
- (C) **Ordination Service.** The pastor shall arrange for the ordination service.

SECTION 8.03 REVOCATION OF ORDINATION

- (A) Should a minister ordained by the church be found living a life unbecoming a servant of the Lord or preaching and teaching contrary to the Word of God, the pastor may call a council to hear the charges and the minister's defense.
- (B) The reviewing council shall consist of the body of deacons and ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the hearing of the charges and the minister's defense.
- (C) Upon a recommendation by a majority vote of the council, the church will then revoke the minister's ordination certificate.

SECTION 8.04 LICENSE

- (A) Those who desire to prepare for the gospel ministry may be issued a license to preach by this church after the pastor and body of deacons have examined the candidate's divine call and qualifications.
- (B) The pastor and the body of deacons may license an associate or assistant pastor as a preliminary step to ordination at a later date.
- (C) A license to the ministry is a preliminary step towards ordination and shall be considered probationary in nature. It is expected that the licensed minister will be considered for ordination within four years of being licensed.

ARTICLE 9 – INDEMNIFICATION

SECTION 9.01 – ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

- (A) 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, 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.

- (B) 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 no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

- (C) This determination of good-faith intent shall be made
 - (1) by a majority vote of the pastor and deacons who were not and are not parties to or threatened with the action, suit, or proceeding;

 - (2) if the described quorum is not obtainable or if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested deacons so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or

 - (3) by a majority vote of the members of the church in attendance.

SECTION 9.02 – EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

To the extent that a pastor, 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.

SECTION 9.03 – 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, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has 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 deacons 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 deacons so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

SECTION 9.04 – 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, or proceeding, as authorized by the deacons in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the pastor, 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.

SECTION 9.05 – 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 his 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, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

SECTION 9.06 – INSURANCE

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

ARTICLE 10 – MINISTRY TEAMS

SECTION 10.01 – PURPOSE

According to Scripture (Ephesians 4:11) one of the responsibilities of pastors is to equip saints for the work of the ministry. The church accomplishes this command by empowering members to be part of ministry teams. Ministry teams equip members by providing training and empower members by helping them discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual gifts and talents for the Lord's work in the church.

SECTION 10.02 – THE SHEPHERDING MINISTRY TEAM

The Shepherding Ministry Team consists of the senior pastor, who shall be the team leader, and all other pastoral staff and wives, all active and inactive deacons and their wives, the church clerk, the church treasurer and all team leaders.

(A) General Duties

The Shepherding Ministry Team shall oversee the other ministry teams to ensure the welfare of the church, effectiveness of specific ministry areas, and be accountable for the resources God has entrusted to the church.

(B) Meetings

The Shepherding Ministry team will meet monthly and provide reports concerning assigned areas

of responsibility/ministry. These meetings are for those currently serving on the SMT; however,

members who desire to have a certain subject matter discussed during a regular or special SMT meeting should put the request in writing and submit to one of the pastoral staff four days prior to the set meeting. The SMT will then consider the proposal, then proceed according to the best interest of the church. If the matter warrants, a member may be asked to come to the SMT meeting.

(C) Specific Duties

- (1) Exemplify Christian character and conduct for the other members by Christlike attitudes and actions.
- (2) Provide counsel and assistance to the pastor in the various ministries of the church.
- (3) Research, formulate and recommend proposals to the church membership at regular and/or special called business meetings.
- (4) Advise the Academy Ministry Team leader on matters which may arise from time to time.
- (5) Formulate, adopt, and amend policies and procedures which affect the various aspects of the total church ministry.
- (6) Approve or disapprove potential personnel recommended by the pastor.
- (7) Create and oversee special teams if needed for specific matters which may arise from time to time.
- (8) Serve as needed with the deacons on a pastor search team.
- (9) Serve as needed as a director of the corporation.
- (10) Review the books of the corporation at the close of the fiscal year or as otherwise determined to be necessary.
- (11) Approve and/or recommend expenditures as needed to the church as authorized under Article 10, Section 10.02 (C).

(D) Expenditures

All major expenditures or indebtedness of the church are authorized in accordance with the following procedures:

- (1) Items over \$250.00 must be approved by 75% of the SMT members present at a regular or special called team meeting.
- (2) Items which are of an emergency nature essential to the daily operation of the church such as electrical, plumbing, telephones, air conditioning, transportation emergencies, etc., may be approved by only two officers of the corporation.

- (3) The purchase or disposal of real property or expenditures over \$2000.00 must be approved by the voting membership of the church.

SECTION 10.03 - TEAM STRUCTURE

All ministry teams are led by a team leader who encourages, equips, and motivates his team captains and team members to achieve excellence in their particular ministry area. Members may serve on as many as five teams each year by voluntarily committing themselves at the annual commitment Sunday each fall (or shortly after becoming a member). The commitment is a simple one-year commitment after which time members may change ministry teams or recommit to the same ministry team. Team captains help assist the team leader in recording successes as well as maintaining accountability so that every team represents the Lord to the best of their ability in each specific ministry area.

SECTION 10.04 – SPECIAL TEAMS

The Shepherding Ministry Team, may create special teams to provide advice and information regarding matters submitted to it for consideration. The special team shall have no authority to act on behalf of the church. The members of the special team shall be chosen by a majority vote of the Shepherding Ministry Team for a specific time and purpose. The special team shall be subject to the control and direction of the Shepherding Ministry Team at all times.

ARTICLE 11 – 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. All suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Shepherding Ministry Team. Specific contributions over \$500 will receive a specific contribution acknowledgement from the church. 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 its tax-exempt purposes stated in Section 1.02.

ARTICLE 12 – ARBITRATION OF DISPUTES

SECTION 12.01 – SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration 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.

SECTION 12.02 – 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 and in accordance with Matthew 5:15-17. 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 12.01, above, and pursuant to the Procedures for Arbitration set out hereinafter at Appendix A.

SECTION 12.03 – 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 Section 3.04, were followed.
- (B) Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Section 3.04 were followed.

SECTION 12.04 – ARBITRATION PROCEDURES

The Procedures for Arbitration shall be as adopted and amended as needed by the Shepherding Ministry Team.

ARTICLE 13 – TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS

SECTION 13.01 – PRIVATE INUREMENT

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, 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 Section 1.02 hereof.

SECTION 13.02 – 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.

SECTION 13.03 – DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of the church, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, the trustees shall dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the church officers shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to tax exempt organizations, which agree with the church's Statement of Faith.

SECTION 13.04 – RACIAL NONDISCRIMINATION

The church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin. This racially, nondiscriminatory policy and statement shall be included in the Academy Parent/Student Handbook as well.

SECTION 13.05 – LIMITATION OF ACTIVITIES

Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Section 1.02.

ARTICLE 14 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

SECTION 14.01—PURPOSE

The purpose of this conflict of interest policy is to protect the church's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the church or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state or federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

SECTION 14.02—DEFINITIONS

(A) **Interested Person:** Any director or officer who has a direct or indirect financial interest.

- (B) **Financial interest:** A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
- (1) An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement,
 - (2) A compensation arrangement with the church or with any individual or entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement, or
 - (3) A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the church is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
 - (4) A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the board of directors decides that a conflict of interest exists.
- (C) **Compensation:** Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are substantial.
- (D) **Board:** The term “board” refers to the trustees of the corporation of the church. Section 13.03—Procedures
- (E) In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- (F) After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, including any presentations by and discussion with the interested person, he shall leave the board meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest involving the transaction or arrangement is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists by a majority vote.
- (1) The chairman of the board shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 - (2) After exercising due diligence, the board or committee shall determine whether the church can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
 - (3) If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the board shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the best interests of the church, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

- (G) If the board has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- (H) If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the board determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

SECTION 14.04—RECORDS OF PROCEEDINGS

- (A) The minutes of the board shall contain the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the board's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- (B) The minutes of the board also shall contain the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

SECTION 14.05—COMPENSATION

A voting member of the board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church for services rendered may not vote on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

ARTICLE 14 – AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting at any church business meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit two (2) Sundays before the vote is taken.

ADOPTION

The foregoing is a true, correct, and complete copy of the and Bylaws of the West Meadows Baptist Church, Inc. adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present on the _____ day of _____, 20_____.

These bylaws supersede any other bylaws of West Meadows Baptist Church.

Date

Church Clerk

APPENDIX A

PROCEDURES FOR ARBITRATION

SECTION 1 – SCOPE OF ARBITRATION

The parties must, prior to the selection of arbitrators, agree to the scope of the matters to be considered by the arbitrators. In doing so the parties must conduct themselves with the utmost courtesy as befits believers in Jesus Christ. If the parties cannot agree upon the scope of the dispute for arbitration, the scope shall be determined by the arbitrators.

SECTION 2 – SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION

(A) The parties, as Christians, believing that lawsuits between Christians are prohibited by Scripture, and having agreed, according to Article 12 of the church bylaws to submit disputes to binding arbitration, and to waive any legal right to take the dispute to a court of law, will refer and submit any and all disputes, differences, and controversies whatsoever within the agreed scope of arbitration to a panel of three arbitrators, to be selected as follows:

1. All arbitrators must be born-again Christians of good reputation in the community and who affirm the church's Statement of Faith in its entirety.
2. Each party shall submit a list of three proposed arbitrators to the other party, and the other party will choose one of the three proposed arbitrators to serve on the panel.
3. The third arbitrator will be selected by mutual agreement of the other two arbitrators.
4. In selecting the arbitrators, each party shall act in good faith in choosing Christian arbitrators who have no prior knowledge of the facts leading up to the dispute, are not related to or close friends with the selecting party, and who will act impartially and with fundamental fairness.
5. No arbitrator may be an attorney.
6. No arbitrator may be employed or ever have been employed by, or under the authority of, either party or any other arbitrator.
7. The arbitrators will be selected as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after the parties have agreed to the scope of the arbitration.
8. The arbitration will be held at a neutral site agreed to by the arbitrators.

(B) The arbitrators shall, subject to the provisions of these procedures, arbitrate the dispute according to the terms of these procedures, the Bible as interpreted by the church's Statement of Faith, and any applicable church documents.

(C) Each party may be represented by counsel throughout the process at the party's own expense. Discovery will be allowed as needed, as determined in the discretion of the arbitrators. Formal rules of evidence shall not apply.

SECTION 3 – TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ARBITRATION

- (A) The arbitrators shall have full power to make such regulations and to give such orders and directions, as they shall deem expedient in respect to a determination of the matters and differences referred to them.
- (B) The arbitrators shall hold the arbitration hearing as soon as possible, but no later than thirty (30) days after the selection of the third arbitrator.
- (C) There shall be no stenographic record of the proceedings, and all proceedings shall be closed to the media and any other individuals not directly involved in the proceedings.
- (D) Normally, the hearing shall be completed within three (3) hours. The length of the hearing, however, may be extended by the arbitrators in their discretion or an additional hearing may be scheduled by the arbitrators to be held promptly.
- (E) There will be no post-hearing briefs.
- (F) The arbitrators are to make and publish their award, in writing, signed by each of them concerning the matters referred, to be delivered to the parties no later than 48 hours from the conclusion of the hearing, unless otherwise agreed by the parties. The arbitrators may, in their discretion, furnish an opinion.

SECTION 4 – CONDUCT AND RULES OF HEARING

- (A) The arbitrators may, in their absolute discretion, receive and consider any evidence they deem relevant to the dispute, whether written or oral, without regard to any formal rules of evidence.
- (B) The parties and their respective witnesses must, when required by the arbitrators, attend and submit to examination and cross-examination under oath as to all or any of the matters referred to in the proceedings, and to produce and deposit with the arbitrators all or any evidence within their possession or control concerning such matters.
- (C) If a party defaults in any respect referred to in Subsection 4.2, above, the arbitrators may proceed with the arbitration in their discretion as if no such evidence were in existence, insofar as it may be favorable to the party in default.
- (D) All presentations shall be controlled by the arbitrators. Any disputes regarding procedure shall be decided solely by the arbitrators.

SECTION 5 – DUTIES OF ARBITRATORS

- (A) The arbitrators are to receive all evidence, prayerfully consider such evidence in an impartial manner, and render a decision which, based upon Scriptural principles, is fair to all parties.
- (B) The arbitrators have full power to order mutual releases to be executed by the parties, and either of the parties failing, such orders shall have the effect of a release, and may be duly acknowledged as such.

- (C) In the event that either party or a witness for either party shall fail to attend the arbitration hearing, after such written notice to such party as the arbitrators shall deem reasonable, the arbitrators may proceed in the absence of such party or witnesses without further notice.

SECTION 6 – DECISION OF ARBITRATORS

- (A) It is preferred that the arbitrators reach a unanimous decision, but if a unanimous decision cannot be obtained, a majority decision will be accepted. The written decision of a majority of the arbitrators shall be final and binding on all parties, and judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrators may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof. There is no appeal from the decision of the arbitrators.
- (B) The decision of the arbitrators is to be kept confidential by all parties for a period of one year. For purposes of these procedures, the church membership may be informed of the decision if the church or any church pastors, officers, trustees, employees, or Shepherding Ministry Team members were a party to the proceeding.
- (C) Should any party commence legal proceedings against another party with respect to the agreed scope of the dispute or the binding decision of the arbitrators, with the exception of an action to enforce the decision of the arbitrators, that party shall pay to the other party all expenses of said proceedings, including reasonable attorneys’ fees. In the event it becomes necessary for one party to commence legal proceedings to enforce the decision of the arbitrators, the non-prevailing party must bear all of the costs of said proceedings, including reasonable attorneys’ fees.

SECTION 7 – PARTIES TO COOPERATE

No party shall unreasonably delay or otherwise prevent or impede the arbitration proceedings. No party will involve the news media in the dispute in any way. No party shall publicize the dispute in any way to anyone not a party to the proceedings, except as permitted by the arbitrators, and except that a party may disclose the proceedings of this arbitration to his or her spouse, legal counsel, accountants, insurance carrier, and as otherwise required by law.

SECTION 8 – COSTS AND EXPENSES

Each party shall pay his or her own costs and expenses related to presenting the party’s case to the arbitrators. The costs of the arbitration, including any fees for the arbitrators is to be shared equally by both parties.

SECTION 9 – AMENDMENTS

These Procedures for Arbitration may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the Shepherding Ministry Team present and voting at any regular Shepherding Ministry Team meeting.

SECTION 10 – ADOPTION

- (A) These Procedures for Arbitration were adopted by a majority vote of the Shepherding Ministry Team at which a quorum was present
- (B) These Procedures for Arbitration supersede the Procedures for Arbitration previously adopted by West Meadows Baptist Church.

Date Approved

Church Clerk

APPENDIX B

YOUTH AND CHILD CARE POLICIES

- I. Why is youth and child training required?
- A. The Bible commands us not to let our good be evil spoken of (Romans 14:16). We are also commanded to do all things “decently and in order” (I Corinthians 14:14) and to “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). In order to help prevent allegations of child abuse, we screen workers, adopt policies and procedures for the protection of the children and staff, and keep good records.
- II. Who is required to take youth and child care training?
- A. All children’s and youth ministry workers of West Meadows Baptist Church, whether paid or volunteer, must take and update their training annually each May/June. Each worker must go through the child-care training and sign that they will follow these procedures before they can work with children and/or youth ministries. It is the policy of West Meadows Baptist Church that no one who has been convicted of child abuse in any form be allowed to work with children or youth in any capacity.
- III. What are the requirements, policies and procedures included in the child care training?
- A. Requirements for all youth and child care workers of West Meadows Baptist Church.
1. Salvation – each worker must have personally accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their life.
 2. Submissive – each worker must be submissive to Biblical authority in all areas of their lives.
 3. Sanctified – each worker must set themselves apart by continually implementing Biblical principles in their life in matters of:
 - a. Honesty – in dealings with all people.
 - b. Moral purity – refrain from fornication, adultery and homosexuality, as well as practices contributing to these such as pornography, vulgarity and profanity.
 - c. Self-Control – demonstrates Christ-like self-control in matters of conduct, attitude and actions. This includes refraining from possession or use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs.
 - d. Dependability – faithful to perform required tasks which may be assigned.
 - e. Forgiveness – willing to forgive others who may have wronged you.
 4. Submitted - complete form CC1 Questionnaire for youth and children’s workers of West Meadows Baptist Church.

B. Policies and Procedures

1. You are not to act as the child's friend in a children's friendship manner. You must always appropriately maintain your proper respect and authority status and act accordingly. This does not mean that you cannot be friendly, but it does mean that you must act at all times with respect and dignity which is befitting to your position of ministry. In regards to dress, workers are asked to dress in a modest and appropriate fashion. Ladies should refrain from wearing short, low-cut, or tight fitting clothing or any type of attire that would draw attention to their bodies. Men should also dress modestly as to exemplify Christ.
2. Male workers should endeavor to never embrace or caress a child. **Always remember that an adult touching a child not his own could be viewed suspiciously.**
3. Female workers should avoid unnecessary contact with the children.
4. No worker should be alone with a child or lead a child into a private place. Always have at least two (2) adults present.
5. Older children should not be permitted to sit on a worker's lap for extended periods. **While this may often be necessary with very small children, ministry workers should understand the increased risk these actions represent and act with discretion. The buddy system is mandatory.**
6. As a general policy, children should not be hugged or kissed by church workers.
7. No workers should ever invite a student to stay overnight alone at his or her home unless the child is a close personal friend of the worker's child.
8. Church nursery workers who deal with babies still in diapers must be ladies and must adhere to the following procedures:
 - a. Always wear rubber gloves.
 - b. Always use rubber gloves when applying lotion or powder.
 - c. A cloth or wipe should always be between you and the child.

Only lady workers may take children to the restroom. We recommend that the restroom door be left open so the nursery worker can stand in the doorway enabling her to supervise the child using the restroom as well as maintaining a posture that would safeguard against any accusations.

9. If possible, avoid directly assisting an older-aged child who has wet or soiled his/her clothes. Endeavor to instruct him/her on how to clean himself/herself without your direct assistance (as frustrating as this may be). You may hand him/her what he/she needs but do not directly clean or wash the older aged child whenever possible.

10. Avoid helping a young boy with his zipper or a young girl with her skirt whenever possible.
11. Older siblings of a nursery age child may not pick up the nursery age child without written parental permission (CC2, CC3). Such permission should be kept on file with the nursery coordinator.
12. Do everything you can to keep parents informed about/involved in their child's activities.
13. All church outings and activities must be approved by a member of the pastoral staff as well as the transportation to and from those activities. After approval is obtained, each participant who is a minor must provide a consent and release form (CC4) that is to be signed by parents or legal guardians.
14. Transportation for church related activities would be done by authorized church personnel only. If and when multiple vehicles are used, they are to stay together as a group, following the directions of the church's authorized coordinator. If you ask another adult to drive other than authorized church personnel, you make yourself personally liable as well as the church. The trip coordinator shall keep an accurate list of all those on the trip and periodically have the adult assistants ensure all children and youth are accounted for. Special care should be taken when leaving parks, restaurants, etc.
15. The Church does not tolerate assault, threats, harassment or abuse against church and/or school personnel or students. Verbal or written threats, racial/ethno cultural harassment, physical and/or sexual harassment, or abuse perpetrated by anyone in the church and/or school, whether intentional or unintentional, is condemned as unacceptable. The Church supports efforts designed to protect the welfare of staff and students. In dealing with matters of alleged assault, threats, harassment or abuse, the dignity and rights of all are preserved and respected. The Church is characterized by a safe and harmonious working environment in which the needs and well-being of every individual is paramount.

Violent behavior shall not be tolerated and will be dealt with accordingly:

a. **Students under the age of twelve:**

Where children in the primary and junior division are behaving in a violent manner, the staff member shall take the appropriate disciplinary action. The parents of the child must be involved in any action plan for remediation. The decision to report to the police will be made by the senior pastor. Police may take reports of incidents of violent behavior committed by persons of this age group. The staff member is to immediately report to the pastoral staff and police incidents involving sexual assault, serious injury, and serious damage and/or violent behavior.

b. **Students twelve or older:**

For young people ages 12-17 years, any violent incident that may be considered criminal shall be reported to the police at the discretion of the senior pastor. Students who are 18 years or over are considered adults,

and the procedures of the state Criminal Code will be followed if these persons are charged and/or tried for criminal activities.

Any violent behavior, whether or not it is reported to the police, is to be reported to the senior pastor and recorded by the staff member on an Incident Report Form containing a description of the violent incident, a reference to the call to the police and, if applicable, reference to any disciplinary response. This information together with any letters to the student and/or parent/guardian will be filed in the church office.

16. Any child or youth worker with the firsthand knowledge of child abuse or reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or is being abused has a state-mandated duty to report the abuse to state officials. The child or youth worker must immediately report the suspected abuse to the senior pastor (or principal – if school related) so together they can file a joint report concerning the matter with the state officials as required under Florida law. If the child or youth worker and senior pastor (or principal – if school related) do not report the incident together, they should notify each other in writing within 24 hours after making the report that the report has been made.

Florida Child Abuse Hotline – 1-800-962-2873
National Child Abuse Hotline – 1-800-422-4453

17. Records must be turned in to the church office so they may be kept on file of each of the following:
 - a. All matters of significant conduct
 - b. All major incidents or injuries
 - c. All matters of discipline
 - d. Attendance (count the children – especially if you take them out of the classroom)

These records must be accurate and include the names of each child, each adult worker, and the date of the class or activity. It is the policy of the Church to have mandatory accident reviews within 30 days.

18. All paid and volunteer workers must have a criminal background check.
19. Children and youth workers are not to go into a child/youths home during visitation while their parents are not home.
20. ALL counseling is to be done according to the official counseling policies of the Church. Failure to do so could result in personal liability.
21. If an accusation of improper behavior is made against you as a worker, in order to neutralize the situation, you will be placed on administrative leave until the matter is resolved. A member of the pastoral staff will then obtain names and statements of all those involved and any witnesses. Written statements signed by witnesses will be notarized in order to clear the matter up as quickly as possible. Upon the accusations being resolved favorably, you will be re-instated. If the allegations are proven to be true, discipline will be carried out by the church lovingly and

fairly in order to avoid future problems.

22. The Church has implemented “universal precautions” in an effort to minimize potential infectious diseases including blood-borne pathogens. We have developed an exposure control plan for all employees to ensure their protection as well as the children and youth to whom they minister who may need minor medical attention for cuts, scrapes, etc.
23. To abide by Florida law, young people who work as helpers in the nursery under adult supervision cannot work more than three hours on a school day and no more than eight hours on a non-school day. If a young person works more than four consecutive hours, they must have a 30-minute break.
24. All youth and childcare workers are to take prudent measures to avoid being alone with any teenager or child of the opposite sex. This includes giving rides to and from activities if doing so at the direction of the ministry
25. Youth and childcare workers are to exercise prudence by making sure no child is locked in the building and/or vehicle after any planned church activities.